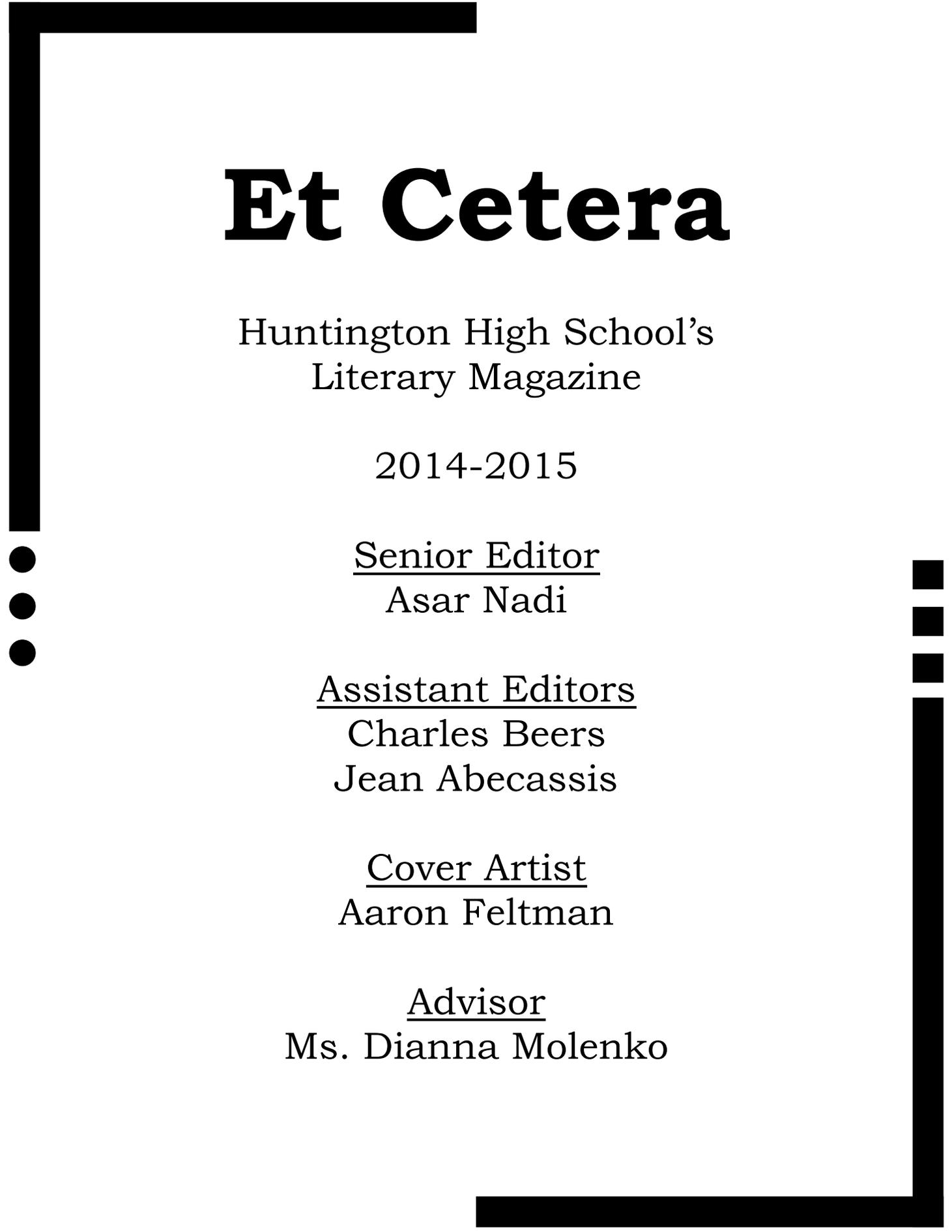




et cetera
LITERARY MAGAZINE

HUNTINGTON HIGH SCHOOL
2014.2015



Et Cetera

Huntington High School's
Literary Magazine

2014-2015

Senior Editor

Asar Nadi

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Aaron Feltman

Advisor

Ms. Dianna Molenko

Dear Reader,

For the longest time I've had the most trouble trying to figure out what to write, how to end your final words. Sitting as I binge watch my favorite TV show, *Criminal Minds*, I can't seem to put the words in place.

It's a very difficult thing trying to say good-bye to your favorite thing in the entire world. This club, the literary magazine, isn't just an extracurricular activity that I would look forward to every week: it's my home. Every member, including my dearest friend Greta Farrell, has become a second family to me. From creating my first cover page for the 2011-2012 magazine to hosting the Hunger Games Night to editing this magazine, I've noticed how fast these years have gone and how far I have gone with this magazine.

I've always loved to write short stories, poems, narratives, etc, and having a club dedicated to your passion has been a blast to have. To be honest, the first time I met Ms. Molenko I thought she was completely weird. It was Halloween and she was dressed as Katniss Everdeen and the first thing that popped into my mind was "Wow, I'm going to have fun with this teacher." Ms. Molenko turned out to be a really great advisor who is not only amazing at what she does, but also someone who you can connect with. Little did I know three years later I'd be her intern for her Grade 10 students. Funny how these things turn out in the end. Thinking about how much she was there for me, I felt as if I owed it to her to do a fantastic job not only as senior editor but also as her intern.

If it's one thing that I would have to say to the future editors of this magazine is this: if you love what you write, then you'll have a nice time editing anything that you read.

Everyone who has contributed and put their hearts into everything they have submitted has made these last few years grow into a success. Thank you, Et-Cetera, for the best four years that I will never forget!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Asar Nadi". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left from the first letter.

Asar Nadi
Senior Editor of *Et Cetera*

Members

Jean Abecassis	Page Montecalvo
John Arias	Asar Nadi
Charles Beers	Mary Pulizzotto
Ann Glackin	Jessica Pulizzotto
Ben Hebert	Lena Scarpulla
Jack Kitzen	Gabe Smith
Olivia Liepa	Jason Stickell
Danielle Marini	Jesse Stickell
Cynthia Martinez	Keti Tsotskolauri

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Ariana Bauer	Ariella Danziger	Victoria Martin
Ally Berwick	Katy Dara	Danielle Melgar
Leah Butz	Kaitlin Dayton	Hanna Murphy
Nina Cartwright	Aaron Feltman	Ashlee O'Donohue
Lois Choi	Gabrielle Goodrich	Jamie Paragallo
<i>Mrs. Colica's Period 2 Class</i>	Stephen Heuwetter	Casey Ryman
<i>Mrs. Colica's Period 4 Class</i>	Mia Idler	Meaghan Scolo
<i>Mrs. Colica's Period 5 Class</i>	Sondy Jean-Baptiste	Jon Stern
Chelsea Connell	Sarah Kitzen	Jake Torregrossa
Shannon Contino	Ekaterina Koulakova	Erica Vasquez

Table of Contents

1) <u>Sacred Rose</u> - Jack Kitzen... <i>poem</i>	page 7
2) <u>Home</u> - Casey Ryman... <i>poem</i>	page 7
3) <u>4Reason</u> - Lena Scarpulla... <i>narrative</i>	page 8
4) <u>Up The Ante</u> - Ben Herbert... <i>narrative</i>	page 9
5) <u>Euphoria</u> - Gabrielle Goodrich... <i>poem</i>	page 10
6) <u>Painless Emotion</u> - Page Montecalvo... <i>poem</i>	page 10
7) <u>The Witch</u> - Ann Glackin... <i>poem</i>	page 11
8) <u>The Outcome</u> - Asar Nadi... <i>college essay</i>	page 12
9) <u>Night Terror #17640</u> - Ashlee O'Donohue... <i>narrative</i>	page 13
10) <u>Bird is the Word</u> - Ron Merrick... <i>poem</i>	page 14
11) <u>Role Reversal</u> - Keti Tsotskolauri... <i>short story</i>	pages 14-15
12) <u>1862 Internal Fight</u> - Cooper Cook... <i>poem</i>	page 16
13) <u>Show Me Love</u> - Mary Pulizzotto... <i>poem</i>	page 17
14) <u>I Hate You</u> - Anonymous... <i>poem</i>	page 18
15) <u>How to Pass the Regents</u> - Jesse Stickell... <i>editorial</i>	page 19
16) <u>JD</u> - Sondy Jean Baptiste... <i>poem</i>	page 20
17) <u>Untitled #4</u> - Anonymous ... <i>poem</i>	page 20
18) <u>Eye of Death</u> - Anonymous... <i>poem</i>	page 21
19) <u>Eyes Shut, World Unseen</u> - Anonymous... <i>poem</i>	page 22
20) <u>Just Another Girl</u> - Mary Pulizzotto... <i>poem</i>	page 22
21) <u>Why I Write</u> - Ann Glackin... <i>narrative</i>	page 23
22) <u>Food</u> - Mrs. Colica's 2nd Per English Class... <i>sonnet</i>	page 24
23) <u>A Love Poem</u> - Ben Herbert... <i>poem</i>	page 24
24) <u>Chapter One</u> - Cynthia Martinez... <i>short story</i>	pages 25-29
25) <u>Washington County</u> - Page Montecalvo... <i>poem</i>	page 29

26) <u>The Teacher</u> - Charles Beers (contest winner)... <i>short story</i>	pages 30-34
27) <u>Silent Lies</u> - Ann Glackin... <i>poem</i>	page 35
28) <u>710 Thugs</u> - Ron Merrick... <i>poem</i>	page 36
29) <u>The Seasons</u> - Mrs. Colica's 4th Per English Class... <i>sonnet</i>	page 36
30) <u>Curse Me</u> - Mary Pulizzotto... <i>poem</i>	page 37
31) <u>The Final Copy</u> - Gabe Smith... <i>short story</i>	pages 38-40
32) <u>Fun Things To Do</u> - Mrs. Colica's 5th Per English Class... <i>sonnet</i>	page 41
33) <u>Eternal</u> - Jack Kitzen... <i>poem</i>	page 42
34) <u>White Room</u> - Mary Pulizzotto... <i>short story</i>	pages 43-44
35) <u>The Tale of the Crown of Corruption</u> - Jon Stern... <i>short story</i>	pages 45-47
36) <u>Unsatisfied: A Gift or A Burden</u> - Lena Scarpulla... <i>narrative</i>	page 48
37) <u>A Days Dream</u> - John Arias... <i>narrative</i>	page 49
38) <u>My Garage</u> - Thomas Koutttron (contest winner)... <i>college essay</i>	page 50
39) <u>Mars is Heaven: Ray Bradbury</u> - Isabel Glasso... <i>narrative</i>	page 51
40) <u>A Short Story</u> - Jessica Pulizzotto... <i>short story</i>	pages 51-54
41) <u>Instruments of War</u> - Ben Herbert... <i>short story</i>	pages 55-56
42) <u>The Disney Creed</u> - Jessica Pulizzotto... <i>short story</i>	page 57
43) <u>Don't Make Me Lose You Too</u> - Katy Dara... <i>poem</i>	page 58
44) <u>Mysterious Image</u> - Sarah Aloe... <i>poem</i>	page 59
45) <u>Winter Sleep</u> - Jack Kitzen... <i>college essay</i>	page 60
46) <u>I Love</u> - Ann Glackin... <i>poem</i>	page 61
47) <u>Mistakes</u> - Cynthia Martinez... <i>short story</i>	pages 62-63
48) <u>Silent Voice</u> - Asar Nadi... <i>narrative</i>	pages 64-65
49) <u>Alone</u> - Sarah Aloe... <i>poem</i>	page 66
50) <u>Disillusioned Dreaming</u> - Ann Glackin... <i>poem</i>	page 67
51) <u>The Foulest Heist</u> - Ms. Molenko, advisor... <i>poem</i>	page 68

Art Credits

1) Kaitlin Dayton...	page 7
2) Ariella Danziger...	page 7
3) Ally Berwick...	page 10
4) Stephen Heuwetter...	page 13
5) Mia Idler...	page 14
6) Jamie Paragallo...	page 16
7) Hanna Murphy...	page 17
8) Victoria Martin...	page 17
9) Meaghan Scolo...	page 18
10) Ariana Bauer...	page 18
11) Jake Torregrossa	page 21
12) Danielle Melgar	page 21
13) John Arias...	page 22
14) Sarah Kitzen...	page 24
15) Ally Berwick...	page 29
16) Ariella Danziger...	page 35
17) Victoria Martin...	page 36
18) Aaron Feltman...	page 37
19) Ally Berwick...	page 37
20) Leah Butz...	page 41
21) Ekaterina Koulakova...	page 42
22) Nina Cartwright...	page 44
23) Chelsea Connell...	page 48
24) Erica Vasquez...	page 49
25) Lois Choi...	page 56
26) Shannon Contino	page 63
27) Victoria Martin...	page 65



-Kaitlin Dayton

Sacred Rose

I don't need to lie,
but I need to tell you how I feel.
When I stare into your eyes and
see your fragile heart,
You're my sacred rose.
Now I know we are not perfect,
But to me you are my world.
Please let my stars rise on your night,
our love will keep them from falling.
Let me be the stars in your eyes
Be the petals in my heart.

- Jack Kitzen



-Ariella Danziger

Home

real birds cry for sticks
Not the stick they come from
Man weeps for a cave
Both lose balance with light
Come to me when I'm afraid of the sun
Come to me when I've lost the moon
Balance me like dawn and dusk
Learn! Lean! You tell me.
But learning is light and learning is dark
Sticks out of sight

-Casey Ryman

4Reason

There comes a time in this world where we all have a person, figure or being that we can't live without, that could make your day shine above the stars when all seemed to be hopeless.

It is up until that point that we are living in a form of limbo, or purgatory: the phase in between utter desperation and sadness, to complete happiness. The middle stage would seem to be the easiest because there are no serious feelings, but that is what makes it the worst. There is no way to know what is going to happen next, who you are going to be with, if you will live a happy life, etc. It is a stage where "the fear of the unknown" becomes prevalent, leaving every action to be questioned, thought over, worried about, all in the prospect of answers. The beauty, and also the downfall of life is, there are no answers.

The quote, "anything can happen" to some can be taken as the most optimistic statement on the planet, but to many, the more pessimistic of the earth at least, could take that quote to mean, "Since you have no control, society will never balance out making the worst always happen to me." All of this "stuff" is pointless, and I use that word on purpose, not because I couldn't think of a better one but strictly because stuff is a combination of things and anything that doesn't have a name doesn't deserve to be remembered. If it was not important enough to mean more than the word "thing" it is not important enough to be remembered in our lives. On the other hand, for the lucky ones at least, they are able to live in a world that's worth it, because there is someone who knows you better than you know yourself, who makes every day more meaningful than the last, and who is the driving force behind you waking up in the morning.

This once in a lifetime, star-crossed lover kind of love is the greatest gift that anyone could receive. The ability to love someone more than you love yourself, to suffer every day so that they would never have to, to take your last breath so they could have a million more, is the kind of love that every young girl dreams for but very few actually get. It is great to live in the glass half-full world, taking everything as another opportunity and always looking at the bright side.

But the reality is, and the truth is, more often than not bad things happen to good people. When it comes down to it, in some way, shape, or form we all want to be remembered. To some, this idea needs to be quantified but to those who truly understand, they know that it is not the wideness of the love it is the depth. A lifetime of many little loves means nothing in comparison to the one true love. Once this idyllic form of happiness enters one's life the simple things mean nothing.

Time begins to stop and the world dies down just for a minute for them to realize their true meaning. It is not to make the most money, be the most successful, or to have the best "things", it is to have the one aspect of your life that you could never live without. When this idea becomes clear nothing else matters. So for the lucky ones, remember to cherish each day as if it were your last and make it count because who knows what can happen next.

-Lena Scarpulla

Up the Ante

I woke up in a dark room, the only beams of light are illuminating a dingy and a square card table. A figure sat at the side opposite me, shuffling a deck of cards with elaborate folds and flips. I had made no noise, but the figure's head snapped up impossibly fast, revealing to me its face. It seemed to me that this person had no natural features, only two uneven eyes that looked as though they had been violently scribbled in with black ink. The eyes never blinked, but remained fixed on me, seemingly urging me to sit. I stayed standing, transfixed by the strange scene before me, until my inaction forced the figure to convey its message in another way. It raised its arm jerkily to point at me, and I heard the sound of bones creaking and bending as if the arm were moving in ways entirely unnatural for this person before me. In movement so wracked by convulsions it can only suggest terrible pain, the figure then lowered its pointer finger down some degrees to indicate the chair opposite it, by the table. Broken out of my stupor, I complied and sat face to face with this ominous figure. No longer needing to point, the figure quickly brought its hands back to the table, eager to recommence with shuffling the cards, the action it seemed most comfortable doing. When it was satisfied with the cards, the figure dealt the two of us a hand, dolling out cards with practiced skill. It said nothing, but the implication was clear. *Let's play.* I took my hand and played, curious where this strange series of events would end up. While I had been looking at my cards, a stack of chips had appeared next to me, standard plastic chips with their values printed on each. The figure made the first bet, and I called. I have no idea how long the game lasted, but I know it was hours. More chips had been given to us than in a normal game, and an aggravating back and forth ensued. I had no idea what we were playing for, or even the identity of my opponent, but I was seized by a strong, even desperate, desire to win.

The figure always dealt. On the second round I reached for the cards to reshuffle them, and quick as a flash the figure's hand grabbed my wrist. It moved my hand back to my side of the table gently, but with enough force that I knew I couldn't have resisted it if I tried my hardest. The game began to turn in the figure's favor, and it eventually came down to the last of my chips on one hand, a pair of aces. Confident with this hand, I called check, thinking I would get a good amount of chips back. After putting down my hand, the figure looked at me for an instant, somehow conveying with its scratched on eyes delight, eagerness, and pity, before putting down its own hand, a four, five, six, seven, and eight: a straight flush. Greedily grabbing my chips, the figure's head shook sporadically, in what could be interpreted as insane laughter. Suddenly the part of the creature's face where a mouth would have been tore open, and the mad laughter became audible. Its cackles chilled my blood and a horror gripped my heart. The figure, still shaking with laughter, spoke as its laughter died down, saying in a voice as coarse as sand, "Oh, you poor, poor, poor, poor, poor..." It trailed off into barely audible muttering, and I was going to ask it what was going on, when I found that I could not. I could not speak, my mouth was gone! My attempts at speech seemed to amuse the figure, who broke into renewed bursts of laughter. As it bellowed, the figure seemed to decay before my eyes, chunks of its body turning to rotten bones and flesh, which then turned to dust, which then fell to the floor. Before the figure completely went away, it turned to me and said, each word enunciated by bursts of laughter, "You. Can. Leave. When. You. Win."

-Ben Hebert

Euphoria

You've held a sparkle in my eye for quite awhile,
But we had merely shared laughs.
I do agree now that patience is key.
Because when our lips touched last night,
you set me free.
You changed the taste of my lips,
You made them glow.
You made them feel lovely in a way I've never known.
It felt so right
It felt so pure,
A few lovely kisses have never felt like that before.

-Gabrielle Goodrich

Painless Emotion

Well I sit next to her and speak only of trivial things,
Not of deeper, darker thoughts;
I save that for the telephone.
For the telephone cannot convey emotion
or even the tension
In the room where two former lovers are speaking softly,
But stiffly.
Yes, the telephone gives a barrier
a sort of reassurance that even if harsh words were indeed spoken
the repercussions would be minor, and I'll go
To social gatherings
And parties
And clubs,
I'll see her face in the crowd and feel absolutely
nothing.

-Page Montecalvo



-Ally Berwick

The Witch

Everyone hates the witch;
no one stops
to listen to her tale.
No one knows
how my brother tossed me out,
Took my crown and my title,
bid me farewell.

Thrown out without reason,
punished
for his treachery.
Since I had magic,
Triton knew
his reign would never be won
If I was there to raise a challenge.

He wanted to be the only creature,
Who could make
the ocean turn.
So he went back
on family,
And took
my precious kingdom away.

The mermaids
scoffed,
mocked;
I was banished,
forced to live forever
in solitude.
He
took
my
whole
life
away,
cut
me
from
my
home.

Yet, they say I'm the witch!
I'm the evil in this world!
Well, if that's what they want,
It's what will be!

Dear Triton took everything that was
mine,
Why shouldn't I take it back?
Why should he be happy while I suffer?
Why should he be allowed any joy at all?
Why shouldn't he lose everything?

I'll take it all away.
First his trident and his power,
then his daughter, Ariel,
along with the rest of his
subservient mermaids.
They will be worms
before me.
Stripped
of their former
self-assumed
glory.
Pathetic.
Crawling,
groveling,
begging
for their life.
And I won't care.

Who shows mercy
for those who showed
none themselves?

Everyone hates the witch,
but I hate them more.
I will make them all bleed,
until there is no one left
behind to defy.
I will take what's mine,
and those
who tried
to keep
it from me
will die.

-Ann Glackin

The Outcome

Racist. Hostile. Ignorant. These were the kind of stares that I received as if one *choora*, or dagger, remained in my back until I could no longer feel it. I was an American, I was a child, and I was innocent.

“TERRORIST!”

I was practically a baby in 2001 when that monstrous event changed my life. The precious innocence that marks children at birth wasn't inside me anymore. I stripped my personality in order to be invisible, and wondered if there were people who actually enjoyed my presence and loved me for who I truly was: an Afghan.

Uniqueness is meant to be beautiful and special; however, I hid. I remained quiet and distanced myself from society in order to protect them from being acquainted with a possible future monster. For a while, I stopped conversing with my family in Farsi, refusing to accept our culture in this cruel world.

I entered an unknown forest of indefinite outcomes. I began to believe that one singular word was hiding in me like a dormant volcano waiting to erupt. I concealed my thoughts about the cruel society in my art that no ordinary human would be able to understand. I thought being an Afghan was a crime like an evil soul taking the body of an innocent person. On the inside, I was murdered. How was I supposed to deal with all of this? I felt as if I were a little girl being slapped in the face. I felt weak. I felt as if there was no one to help me escape, except myself. I was the only one to save myself from these thoughts and, somehow, I managed.

I saw the light peeking into my eyes whispering that I will be content soon. My body began to arise as if I was physically being pushed in the hallway to move. I dug my fingers into the grimy earth, climbing for a way out and hoping I was close to an end. I climbed as each disgrace my mind accepted began to spit out like

a fireball. The thoughts, that consumed my body, shrunk every day acting as if it were the snail and, I, the salt. Reaching the top, and opening my head from under to feel the bright glow warm my face, felt victorious. I was no longer a lost soul.

After the nightmare in 2001, I had to learn how to live in this differentiated earth of perceptions. I forced myself to be someone who I was terrified to become: a naive, hidden child. Now, looking back, I realize that forcing myself to change just to be accepted by society was the catalyst for my appreciation of who I really am. My creative works, either painting or writing, represent who I am in this world; not that one, insignificant word: terrorist. However, being acquainted with that remark taught me a valuable lesson: *Tanhaa cheezi ke metawaanad damaagh ra hefz nomaayad een ast ke bedaanad ke tu boodan chee ma'ani daarad. The only thing that can save the mind is to understand what it means to be you.*

-Asar Nadi

Night Terror #17640

Last night my nightmare started out with me alone in a white room which consisted of one flickering light bulb. The light went out for about 10 seconds, but when it came back on this time there was a wooden chair sitting in a pool of blood.

In what seemed to be a blink of an eye the 4 legs of the chair snapped along with a familiar blood curdling scream ringing in my ear. Afterward- there was complete darkness that seemed to last forever at the time.

BOOM. CRASH.

I was back in the white room, my 9 year old sister Rylee, was strapped into a hospital bed with both of her legs chopped off... begging for someone or something to stop hurting her, she couldn't see or hear me because for some peculiar reason I was invisible. Blood was everywhere, and all I wanted to do was help. There was a loud knocking at the door. BOOM. BOOM. BOOM. It was so frightening, I felt as if it wasn't in my head at all; could this really be happening to me right now? Is this real? Am I in hell? The most disturbing part was not knowing who was trying to break in through the door, just the fact that they kept knocking made me want to scream even though I didn't have a voice. Finally, the door started to creak getting wider, and wider... another version of me walked into the room carrying an axe. I then walked over to myself but somehow got sucked in. Looking down, I was now the one with blood on my hands, unable to control myself, I blurted out, "All I wanted to do was help!", in the process of chopping my baby sisters left arm completely off. Stepping back, I witnessed the reflection in the pool of blood wasn't myself at all, I was an old Man all along.

wakes up 3:07 A.M.

-Ashlee O'Donohue

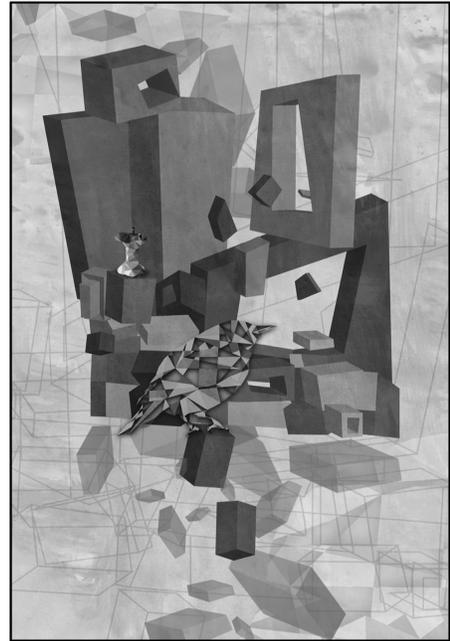


-Stephen Heuwetter

BIRD is the Word

If you're a bird, you're a turd
if you're a bird, no one's ever heard
anything good about you.
If you're a bird,
you're even dumber than Perd.
If you're a bird, you're annoying and dumb.
No one wants to hear your chirps,
or your stinky bird burps.
A bird lies and tries
to seem like he doesn't lie.
A bird steals from his friends
and then tries to be friends again,
just so he can steal from other friends.
A bird brings no flowers to the party,
And yet suggests she may smell everyone else's.
A bird is not Ron, or Kelly, and never will be.

-Ron Merrick



-Mia Idler

Role Reversal

First day of having Photoshop on my computer was going fairly well. I had spent hours editing pictures and experimenting with new adobe tutorials, while coming up with ideas for my next shoot. At this pace, I would be able to finish my AP 2d design portfolio in no time.

Life was good.

“Keti, your mom and I are going for a walk. We will need you to pick us up in about half an hour, so keep your phone close so you don't miss our call.” My stepdad told me.

“Sure, whatever.” I mumbled while attempting to clone stamp the tree out of the picture. No matter how much I tried, the plant refused to disappear inconspicuously. Come on, clone stamp! You can't fail me like this!

“Come on, just a little bit more.” I whispered as I dragged the computer mouse across the picture. I was so close to reaching the final product. So close...

“Aha!” I finally managed to get rid of the tree from the image. Now the picture looked way more intense and as an added bonus, nobody would be able to tell the original picture had a seriously ugly tree in it.

My happiness was cut short when I realized that in my quest of editing, I had completely forgotten about my parents. And it had already been an hour since they left.

Oh God!

“I’m in so much trouble.”

I quickly checked my phone for any missed calls, but surprisingly I found none. That was weird.

I decided to call my stepdad. As I waited, I heard the phone ring downstairs and I sighed, realizing he must have left his phone at home. Classic! He always forgot his phone.

Well, if he didn’t have his phone, then my mom would definitely have hers. After all, they planned on calling me so I could pick them up. I paced impatiently as I waited for my mom to answer, running down the stairs in process so I could grab my car keys. Once I reached the first floor, I heard vibration coming from my mom’s bag. That’s when the horrible revelation hit me: none of my parents had phones with them.

It was already dark outside. What if something bad had happened to them? I should have noticed how long they were gone sooner. Before I could fall into a full blown panic session, I ran out of the house and quickly jumped in the driver’s seat. I could not afford to freak out at the moment; I had to take responsibility and find my parents. They couldn’t have gone that far, so maybe I’d drive around the neighborhood first.

As I pulled out of the driveway, I had not even traveled five feet, when I saw two shadows coming my way. Two very familiar shadows!

My parents were happily walking, hand in hand, laughing about something and, despite the relief of seeing them unharmed, I was furious. I had been worried sick about them.

“Where were you?”

“Our walk just took longer than expected.” Replied my mom and she just kept on walking, continuing her previous conversation with my stepdad.

Meanwhile, I was still sitting in the car, completely bewildered. I could not believe how calm they were about all this. After a few seconds, I remembered I was still in the car, parked right in the middle of the road so I quickly made a 3-point turn and drove up to my house.

As I turned off the car and locked up the garage, I prepared a long lecture for my parents.

The second I opened the door to my house, I put my hands on my hips, just like my mom, and stared my parents down.

“We need to have a talk about responsibility.”

-Keti Tsotskolauri

1862 Internal Fight

Black/white, a division that cuts like a knife.
Why was it I that was chosen for this life?
The white man took my name
then replaced it with a price.

Ignorance, deprived of learning makes our race different;
education is significant.
My son's future could be so bright,
if the South could see at the end of the tunnel there is light.

There is no need for this pitiless life, to be built upon strife.
It is too late for me as you can see, bruised and beaten-
today I turned thirty three.
The only gift I want is to be free.

Black, white, two shades that determines rights.
Let's end this internal fight.
One hundred years from now, my great grandson will be a free man,
working on his own land.

- Cooper Cook



-Jamie Paragallo

Show Me Love

Teach me how to feel
Show me what to do
I want to live and love
As others did too.

Teach me how not to hurt
Show me how to heal
I want to make sure you love me
Because I'm not sure how it feels.

Teach me how to be THAT girl
Show me how to steal your heart
You've already stolen mine
Please don't tear it apart!

I promise I will never hurt you
Like others have done to me
Our hearts are pad-locked
And we have each other's keys.

Teach me how to love
Show me what it means
And we can have a love
That lasts for eternity.

-Mary Pulizzotto



-Hanna Murphy



-Victoria Martin



-Meghan Scolo

I hate you

My eyes must see Zachary at my feet
What a beautiful sight to see, today
I want to stomp his face out on the street
No telling what I'll do to make him pay
I really hate his ugly, stupid face
Hiding behind twitter and a dumb gang,
I really want to dip his face in paste
This ridiculous twitter shit won't hang
I'm not gonna stand for this, man, you heard
I wish I could shove you're face in the dirt,
Everyone from here knows you're a dumb bird
Shouldn't be hard to get Zachary hurt.
I freaking hate your guts Zachary,
You're going to hell; your life is a sin.

-Anonymous



-Ariana Bauer

How to Pass the Regents

When your instructor hands you your exam, go to the multiple choice section. Read the question that they give you. If you don't know what to do, proceed to guessing but with these special steps:

1. The choices are these:
 - i. A for how awesome you'll be in college
 - ii. B for how brilliant you'll be in college
 - iii. C for college
 - iv. Choice D doesn't exist, who cares about choice D!?
2. For this style of guessing, choice C must be picked to determine your future. If you get choice C correct, guess where you're going in the future?
3. If you get that answer correctly, now's the time to see how awesome or brilliant you'll be! Automatically pick A for the next one, and then B for the one after that. If you don't go in this order, you're already going to get it wrong. So, it goes like this: C to A to B, or in other words, CAB.

When you receive your exam back, look at your test grade and if you got a poor grade, that is because there are two wrong things that you have done on your test. One of them is using this method that you've just read. To begin, to actually pass the regents, you must have knowledge to pass it. Sure, guessing may help every once in a while, but DO NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES base it solely on luck. That'll be your *demise* on the exam!

The second one is that you didn't pay attention in class and used this as an escape goat to *compensate* for your actions. Your classes that you are in are supposed to help you pass and succeed in life and sleeping and not paying attention is not such a good idea for you. We have a big amount of time in our classes so I suggest you use it wisely!

However, if you do well in your classes but is just not a good test taker, then it's a different story. If you get anxious and freak out during an exam, then I suggest you watch a video on how to deal with it. I recommend going on YouTube and search how to deal with these problems. I hope that this recommendation will benefit anyone who has this problem. The next step is practicing 10 questions each night so you'll remember each bit of information instead of cramming it all in your head on one day, and trying really hard to remember what you've learned in the next day.

THE MOST IMPORTANT ONE IS THIS: TAKE YOUR TIME!!! This is the most important tip because if you rush at all, you'll be getting answers wrong when you actually knew that answer! Trust me, I've done it in the past and did terrible because of it. Take your time and take advantage of it! If you're done early, rest a bit for maybe five or ten minutes and then look back on your exam. There's plenty of time so why not check it over while you have the chance?

So in other words, I hope this helps anyone who reads this and takes advantage of what's in front of them! I may have suggested helpful tips but it's up to you if you will succeed or fail. Make the choice in life because you have that power to make something happen! No one else but you! Good luck and take care!

-Jesse Stickell

JD

Set me up not, the god of deception,
Cause if this lover's thirst is quenched
By a drink called dehydration
He shall fall to his very grave of pity.

Let me feel the follicles of her hair on her head
Breathe the breathes that she exhales
Taste the sun sweat presence of her presents
Only to be burned by the gift of her existence and regret
Questing the meaning of life
Cause I am a survivor of the disease called love at first sight
And wish only to infect you with my affection.

Synced not by the moment, but by the knowledge of our distance
Let me cut the lines of our boundary so we can be one for an hour,
A minute, or maybe just split second
God only knows the true thirst quencher is the kiss from the lips of true love
So lover, kiss these lips
Cause you are the meaning of life,
And without you I would just die.

-Sondy Jean-Baptiste

Untitled #4

Doing 7 rails a day/
Now stranded on the 3rd one/
Train comes/
Brain dead
Mind Numb/
So fuck love/
Overrated garbage anyway/
Who are you to write?
You're not Poe/
You're not Hemingway/
Incisions in flesh/
Counting more lines/
Nervous, solemn laughter/
Boys don't cry

-Anonymous



-Jake Torregrossa

Eye of Death

It's the eye of death,
of a dark guest,
Close your eyes, Close your eyes,
It's a shadowy crest,
Soaked in darkness
And a lack of mercy,
I couldn't even imagine why
Someone would look at such an eye,
You did....?
Good-bye.

- Anonymous



-Danielle Melgar

Eyes Shut, World Unseen

I'm afraid of what happens when I blink.
it's not the darkness that scares me
rather than what I miss
when I'm trapped in my head.
What do you see when my eyes
are closed?

-Anonymous



-John Arias

Just Another Girl

Don't worry about me
I'm just another girl who's obsessed
with every hug you give me.
Just another girl, passing by,
No one on your mind.
Just another girl who doesn't stop thinking
about the possibility of you and me.
Obsessive? Maybe. Confused? Definitely!
Just because you made me feel special.
That's all it takes. For me to fall for a guy like you.
And it sucks.
And to be honest, it hurts so much,
to see you treat a girl like you treat me.
Special? No.
I'm Just another girl.

-Mary Pulizzotto

Why I Write

I write because my thoughts are numerous, twisted and tangled, impossible to understand until they are on the page.

I write to make sense of the things that baffle me. Nothing makes sense until there is a pen in my hand and ink bleeding into the page.

I write to explain the way this crazy, insane, beautiful world makes me feel. Everyone sees the same world, but we all see it differently. To others, the ocean is just a body of water but to me, it is the home of every mystical creature and the beginning of many perilous adventures. Adventures that I crave to experience and share.

I write because I've never stopped playing pretend. I still believe there are fairies living in every hollow nook of the trees in my back yard and a spirit living in every animal I see.

I write because I realize that I may never encounter a fairy, an enchantress, a goblin, a unicorn, or a mermaid outside of my fantasies.

I write because I know that there is magic in the most ordinary things.

I write to share the magic of a sunset, a perfect night on a beach. The beauty of a solitary leaf floating softly to the ground and wish spent dandelions blowing in the breeze.

I write because I'm terrified of growing old and cynical. I'm terrified of losing the magic forever, of forgetting about love and the promise of a happy ending.

I write because I never want to buy into the idea that love never lasts.

I write because I never want to become a statistic instead of a person.

I write because every day this beautiful world is deteriorating and that sunset, that perfect night, that drifting leaf, that blown dandelion will never exist again.

I write because every moment is fleeting and my life is disappearing along with my thoughts, my dreams, and my aspirations.

Above all, I write because I'm selfish, and I don't want to be forgotten. I don't want to be remembered just for my actions, but for the words that live and fester and grow inside of me, just begging to get out.

- Ann Glackin

FOOD

Brown brownies are chocolaty and yummy.
Brownies are a wonderful tasty treat.
They're gooey and sit inside my tummy.
They are so sweet and very nice to eat.
Taste of cheese upon the lying taste buds.
The flakey crust that breaks upon my hand.
I put extra sauce and it sometimes floods.
All the pizza is surely grand.
Watermelon is a great food to eat.
It's green and red and has a bunch of seeds.
Drip drop drip drop its stick on my feet.
Watermelon gives nutritional needs.
Food is delicious and it fills you up.
Be careful or your stomachs will blowup.

-Created by Mrs. Colica's Period 2 English Class

A Love Poem

by Lovecraft

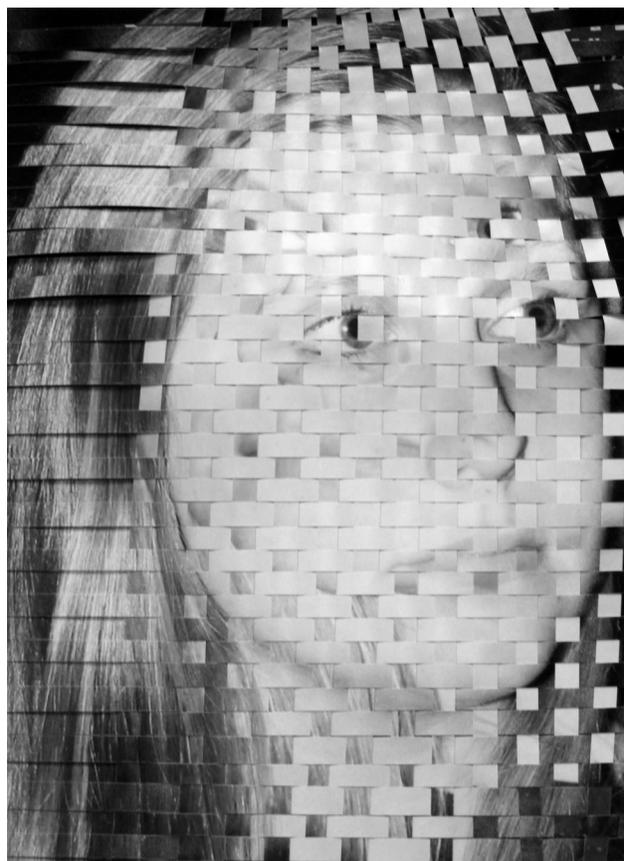
My love for you is potent
and beyond comprehension.
Like a sun submerged in water
Hot and cold in constant contention.

Where others fall to madness
wracked by a nameless fear.
The bond between us withstands
all horrors dark and sheer.

It contains daemonic powers
to help us stand the test of time
and Eldritch Gods, indescribable,
coated in noisome grime.

As the faint light of day gives way
to the spectral scene of night
Our love remains kindled
in immemorial light.

-Ben Hebert



-Sarah Kitzen

Chapter One

“Yes, dad, I promise to call you when I get there” I said.

“Are you sure you’re staying with Jessica?” He said worriedly.

“Yes dad.” I gave him a hug, he looked like he needed it.

“In case you need help or anything I have a friend who has a son named Travis, maybe he could help you around. His number is 516-862-9010. Better yet, I’ll tell him to pick you up at the airport!”

“Dad its fine Jessica will pick me up” I said politely, he still wasn’t letting up.

“Travis could pick you up.” He said. I knew he wasn't going to take no as an answer so I just agreed with him.

We said our goodbyes. I was heading to a new city for me. I was transferred from North Carolina to New York for a business trip. The trip was only going to last for three weeks. My company asked me to investigate a particular house. However, I could not concentrate when I was on the plane. I sat next to this guy that looked like he was going to murder someone. I couldn’t relax with that guy next to me. At some point I managed a quick nap; I couldn’t handle holding my eyes open any longer. I dreamed that I finally reunited with my mom once again. My mom left me when I was five; she said it was for my own safety. In my dream I couldn’t really see her. She was standing in front of this really bright light. I heard her voice and it was comforting to me, “Alice don’t go there...” She held out her hand, yet as I slowly reached for it, she vanished! I woke up. The serial killer look alike next to me was poking me.

“What?” I asked angrily, I hadn’t wanted to leave that dream.

“Umm, I just wanted to know if you had a pen.” I handed him a pen.

“Now leave me alone.” I rudely replied.

As hard as I tried, I couldn't fall back to sleep. The pilot announced that we have arrived. I wondered, is it possible that someone could send a message or a warning in a dream? I never had a dream so realistic like that one. I didn't dwell. I returned my thoughts to imagine what it was going to be like in New York City.

I sat waiting for someone to get off the plane, but no one did. I stood up to disembark anyway. Each passenger was looking in my direction. Literally, they were all staring at me. I walked down the aisle. In my absence I heard people finally getting out of their rows. I felt eyes boring into my back. Everywhere I walked in the airport, people stared at me. Was it because I dress differently? As I thought more about it, I felt less people staring, but their absence just made me notice little kids who seemed to stare more than before! I felt like I was strolling down the runway of a Victoria Secret fashion show. As I was walking toward the exit I saw this little girl, with two ponytails one on each side of her head. She was holding a stuffed tiger. The toy kind of looked like my tiger from when I was a little girl. It couldn’t be though because it was one of a kind. A small voice called out, “Mommy that’s the woman.” As

I walked passed them the little girl wouldn't stop staring at me.

"They're looking for you."

I froze. My legs couldn't carry me fast enough. I started speed walking, but I knew I had to run. I bolted out the door, pumping my legs and arms wildly. I glanced back to see if the little girl was still there, she wasn't. Before I could look back... BAM, I crashed into a blond man, with tan skin like a surfer. We both fell flat on the ground; I rubbed my head.

"Hey, are you okay?" asked the man as he held out his hand to me. I reached back, and he pulled me up.

"Umm yeah. I'm sorr-"

"No it's my fault. I didn't see you there. I guess that's what I get for texting while walking." He was smiling. We both laughed. He had the most brilliant blue eyes I'd ever seen. I couldn't stop staring at them. "I'm Travis." He said holding his hand out for the second time today.

"I'm Alice, nice to meet you." I responded with a firm handshake.

"Nice to meet you too." He responded back smiling.

"So Alice, what brings you to New York?" He asked

"Oh just a business trip really." I responded "I have to investigate this house in the city."

"What's the address?" He asked.

"66 Maple Avenue" I responded. "It's supposed to be a nice house." I started to think. Was this the guy my Dad wanted me to be helped by? His name is Travis and he's here at the airport...

"Oh." He responded, sounding shocked. "I'm supposed to be picking up a girl who's here for the same reason: she's the daughter of my Dad's old friend or something."

"Umm, Henry Lee's daughter?" I inquired, already sure of the answer.

"Wait you're the daughter?!" He asked smiling.

"Yeah, wow this is a nice way of meeting" I joked.

"Do you have someone to take you to your house or can I take you?" He asked.

"Umm well my friend is supposed to come. Let me just make sure. I'll be right back." I dialed Jessica. It went straight to voicemail. I called again. It went straight to voicemail. She's probably out at a club. Ugh. She's so unreliable. At that moment I noticed that Travis was waiting for me by my luggage. I walked back over to him.

“What'd she say?” he asked.

With anger rising in my voice I replied. “Well, she didn’t answer, it went straight to voicemail. It's 11:30 where am I supposed to go now?”

He smiled. “Well this is New York City. The city that never sleeps! We could go to a café?”

“Um sure, a coffee wouldn't hurt.” I smiled, excited to go, but still a little unsure. Well my dad did say that he could help me out so, why not!

“Alright, great.” He smiled. I bit my lip.

He grabbed hold of my bags and carried them out to his car.

Is this guy rich or something? He had a Bugatti Veyron Super Sports. It’s one of the most expensive cars in the world. It’s about 2.5 million dollars! He caught me staring at his car; he saw my shocked face. He chuckled as he opened the door for me.

Before I sat down I looked straight ahead of me and right there was the little girl from the airport. She was just standing there, staring at me. “Hold on.” I said to Travis and I walk over to the little girl. She was still holding the tiger.

I squatted down to her level. “Who are you?” I asked. Silence.

“Don’t worry about me.” Wearing a serious face she continued, "All you need to know is that people are coming. Bad people.”

“What bad people?” I asked, bewildered by this tiny stranger. I felt a tug.

Apparently Travis tapped my shoulder so I turned around.

“Who are you talking to?” he asked.

“The little girl.” I turned back around. The only problem was that the little girl wasn’t there anymore.

Was I imagining things? Maybe it was the airplane food. It had to be the airplane food, but then again that girl just felt real. I should let it go.

Once he saw I was alright, Travis got in the car and started up the engine to

begin our cruise around the city. It was amazing! The city looked so beautiful at night. It was kind of silent as we drove around. He left me to my thoughts. I bet he thinks that I'm a lunatic; a crazy woman that talks to herself. We drove into Time Square. It was so bright, and it looked better in person than in pictures. Now I understand Jay Z in that song Empire State of Mind. It's so inspiring. The only downside was the people. It's just that it's really crowded. I started taking pictures with my camera.

"Oh so you're a photographer? I used to be a photographer myself."

"I took photography classes in high school." I said while continuing to capture the city. "It's a way I can express myself. I take pictures of things I feel in that moment. People express their feelings by music, sports but I don't."

"Then why didn't you start a career as a photographer?" He asked.

I stopped taking pictures for a second.

"Why didn't I? I guess I always thought it couldn't possibly go anywhere. Anyways, where's this café you told me about?" I was getting nervous, I should have been home, and I couldn't forget the girl's cryptic message.

"Right around the corner." He was smiling again.

He had better be right about this café, I was hungry and thirsty after having terrible airplane food, that apparently makes people hallucinate. I'm I was going to kill Jessica later. My dad would kill ME if he found out that I was wondering around NYC, but maybe not if he knew I was with Travis.

That was the least of my worries. I just needed to know this guy. Is he a good guy? A criminal? A drug addict? That's why I came on this "date." It's not actually a date, just two strangers getting to know each other. I had to.

Travis pulled up to the Cinema Café. I had trouble opening the car door he opened it for me. Talk about embarrassing. When we walked inside, there were mostly couples and a couple of families sitting in the restaurant. There was a family of three in the right corner, a woman, a man and a little girl. She looked familiar. Wait. Could it be that girl? My maybe-maybe-not-so-hallucinogenic little girl?

"Table for two?" the waitress interrupted my thoughts and blocked my view.

"Yes, please." Travis responded.

"This way." The waitress walked down the aisle. While she was leading the way I looked back to see if the girl was there. She wasn't. Imagining things again? I blame the airplane food. Under the dim lights Travis and I sat down across from each other. Skimming through the menu didn't take long; the menu was pretty short for a big restaurant. I didn't know what to order, maybe a margarita pizza? But what if I start eating like a pig?! I'm so hungry and the description of the pizza looked really good.

“Can I get you guys a drink?” the waitress asked.

“I’ll have the Café Latte” said Travis.

As I look around the menu I finally said “I’ll have Iced tea please.” The waitress smiled and walked off. We sat there with awkward silence. Someone had to break it, of course it was me.

“So umm what do you do for work?” I asked biting my lip. He chuckled.

“What?” I asked smiling.

“Each time you ask me something you bite your lip.” He said teasing.

“I do not!” My shriek oozed out through my laughing.

I stood up, needing to take a minute.

“Where are you going?” He asked.

“Bathroom.” I said. As I walked in it smelled like vanilla, so good. All the stalls were taken so I waited by the sinks until one wasn’t occupied. The middle stall opened slowly. Slowly arising from the stall was the little girl.

-Cynthia Martinez



-Ally Berwick

Washington County

On drives home from faraway places,
maybe it’s not the turbulence
or shitty heating
that’s making me sick
Perhaps it’s the thought of returning home

-Page Montecalvo

The Teacher

The door opened gently and carefully by a hand that had grown so accustomed to the cold, metallic knob that it knew exactly the right amount of force necessary to fulfill its task. The old wood creaked twice, as it always had, and went about its revolution methodically. This ritual had been performed many times by many hands, but this instance was unique. There was a subtle blend of emotion and trepidation here, hidden in the nostalgic grasp of the hands that guided the door along its pathway. The hands let go, and their owner took his first steps into the room.

There was no denying that he was a professor; you could tell simply by looking at him. The man held the visage of a seasoned intellectual, sporting a coral collared shirt and lavender pants. It was a strange choice, but a combination he wore well. More indicative, however, was the character that transcended his costume. His expression was neither sad nor tired, but rather a twist of unsatisfied finality, like a weary traveler who had reached his destination without the enlightening experiences that he had been promised on the long, winding road. With a deep breath, he walked to the vacant seat in the middle of the room and sat down, folding his hands together and staring emptily at the rows of empty desks that surrounded him.

Although there were no windows to tell him, the teacher knew that the sun was beginning to set. One could not help but notice the tranquility of the school, as if the building's collective stresses had just been let loose and replaced by some satisfyingly indescribable freedom that had been lingering in the shadows. Summer had arrived, and the school year had just officially come to a close.

Unfazed by the lack of life in his classroom, the man continued his daily routine. He straightened his chair, stacked the papers which held his lesson plans for the day, and cracked his back to remove all the aches that had accumulated over the days, the months, and even the years. As if unsure of how to proceed, his eyes began to wander. They began to take in his office, his second home, with precision, trying desperately to memorize every minute detail and secret it had offered him throughout his life.

It was a small little rectangle that offered many a discomfort when he had first arrived. He remembered how his heart sank upon entering it: no windows, desks with chipped surfaces, and a broken air conditioner. The first week of his career was not only a battle with his nerves but also a perpetual clash with the congestion of his confinement. Along with the desks that circled around his own, like musicians eagerly camped around the feverish baton of a maestro, there was also a pair of chalkboards on the wall behind him. However, one could barely notice their presence, as they had been completely concealed by a large SMART Board. The man smirked.

Beneath his calm and collected attitude was a fiery passion for the past. He was regarded as a social enigma throughout the building, unable to connect with the smartphones and fads that consumed his students. He was the advocate for self-sufficiency and idealism and tried to serve as a beacon of light in the darkening era of technological dependency.

Soon, his eyes focused in on another relic. The teacher had always loved reading, tirelessly promoting works of literature and intellectual discussions to his students, who met his advances with continual disdain. Next to the looming SMART Board was a small gallery of his most treasured historical texts. One book stood out in particular. It was a Lincoln biography, a staggering 900-page recollection of the renowned hero that he had assigned as a final project one year. But it was not the subject of the book or its author that bore significance. In this instance, the reader had shaped its story.

As if on cue, the mists of the past arose from the tile floor and danced across the barren landscape. The kaleidoscopic visions found their partners and merged together. They formed a body, a teenager to be exact. The vision towered over the teacher at 6 feet and possessed the formidable physique of an athlete. He had been a football star, a lacrosse legend, and a master at anything that involved brute strength and tenacity. He possessed both of these attributes, as well as a winning smile and the most beautiful girl the school had ever seen. He was also failing.

The teacher had hated him from day one. He was a representation of everything he loathed about the new generation. He was cocky. He was too dependent on the Internet to solve his problems and lacked the ingenuity to procure anything but spoon-fed answers in his classes. And he hated reading. That was the final straw.

The scene changed before the teacher's eyes. It was about a week before the paper was due, nearly three weeks after it had been assigned. The teacher had a devilish smile on his face as his enemy approached with clear signs of defeat on his face. The teacher began formulating ways to truly emphasize his victory and burn the white flag to ashes. But it never came. The war that the teacher had waged had been a lie as the boy reached into his backpack, revealing the massive volume of Lincoln's life. Tears started flowing down the boy's face as he opened its well-worn pages. Each one had been analyzed with scrutiny, littered with a barrage of highlighted phrases, underlined vocabulary, and Post-its to mark important moments in the narrative. The boy didn't hate reading. He just didn't understand.

That was the first stage in the teacher's evolution, as he was the one to finally call for a truce. That day left and another one came, with another desk pulled up alongside of his. The boy and the teacher hunched over the intimidating text and began to talk. Minutes became hours, and hours became days. Soon, the man had grown so accustomed to his pupil that the second desk was waiting for his arrival when the bell signaled the end of the day.

The vision transformed one last time. The teacher and student were talking once more, only this time the visible pressure had escaped the boy's mind. The teacher reached into his briefcase and pulled out a paper. It was marked up and corrected many grammatical flaws in indelible red ink, but the letter grade it held was what truly mattered. It was enough.

The teacher of the present looked back on the teacher of the past in that fleeting moment. He begged for the shadow of his former self to reach out to the boy and congratulate his efforts, to exude the pride that was building inside his heart. Maybe

he would have come back if he had. Instead, the two men shook hands and the student bade him farewell.

And with that, he exited the room and the teacher's life forever.

The teacher sighed. It had been a very good year. Still, however, his reminiscence had not fully sated his desire for resolution. His eyes slowly drifted from the miniature library and wandered back to the desks that faced him. In spite of how the world inside the classroom changed, it seemed that those decaying countertops would be the only permanent fixtures that time could not drag away. One stood out in particular. In the middle of the front row was a seemingly ordinary seat that held no distinction above or below its counterparts. However, it too held memories.

A new vision appeared before the teacher. It was another boy, but a sharp contrast to his predecessor. The student was scrawny and small, wearing thick-rimmed glasses that jutted out from his pale face like the lens of a telescope. His apparel gave the teacher's wardrobe a run for its money, boasting a traditional blazer and a freshly-iron crimson tie. Even in spite of his appearance, which would in most other cases bring about the scorn of his peers, this boy carried himself with an almost surreal confidence, as if he had nothing to prove to anyone but himself.

The teacher remembered his fascination as the well-dressed freshman entered his classroom for the first time. He had sat in that seat, front-and-center, possessing a vibrant life and interest, *genuine interest*, in the teacher's lectures. Never before had one of the countless starry-eyed faces actually meet his enthusiasm for the material with an equally animated fervor. That year, he could have cared less about the mass of lifeless bodies that surrounded the body. For all he cared, it was his first experience with individual tutoring: tutoring to a pair of ears that not only listened but *absorbed*.

He knew the boy would come back after class that day. During his lunch period, he returned to his seat and looked the teacher straight in the eyes, that eagerness for knowledge still fresh on his face. No words were spoken that day. The teacher beckoned towards his vast collection and the boy needed no hesitation.

After a cursory glance at the shelves, he decided to take the first book on the top shelf. He held the moderately-thick volume in his hands with unspoken reverence, as if it was an invaluable artifact of some prestigious museum. The boy took his seat once more. For the rest of the period neither of them said a word, but only one of them was truly lost in their book. The teacher stared blankly at the words in front of him as his mind raced. *I wonder what he's thinking about the novel... Is this kid serious about reading it? Is this all just a joke or is he really interested?*

Their first real discussion didn't occur until the week after, when the boy closed the back cover of his literary journey meditatively. It started with a simple question. Why? The teacher thought for a long time about the implications of the historical text, then found the perfect answer camouflaged by simplicity. Why not? Everything in the room grew at a rapid pace: the complexity of their discussions, the difficulty of their readings, the bond between the two... With each passing novel, the teacher and student ascended the staircase of comprehension and enlightenment

step by step, until the consciousness of the two travelers merged. The teacher and student were one and the same.

It was a euphoric year of discovery and reassurance for the teacher. The boy had been a miracle, an intellectual prodigy who offered a fresh new perspective on life and occasionally assumed the role of the teacher, reminding his superior of forgotten details. But as quickly as this wave of energy and revitalization had crashed onto the shore, it receded back towards the sea.

He exited the room, and the teacher's life, forever.

The teacher grew misty-eyed as the emptiness of the present slowly overtook his memories. Like an addict searching for a replicative high, the teacher frantically searched for more gateways to the past. Suddenly, his eyes connected. It was another desk, only this one sat dejectedly in the back corner of the room, partially isolated from its companions. It had many occupants, but only one's memories yielded a perfect mold.

The teacher didn't even notice the boy for the first week of class. He was the class ghost, with his head constantly in his folded arms as if they were supporting some massive weight that collapsing on top of him. One day, after a relatively stagnant period full of empty stares and a firm resistance to participation, the boy came to him.

It was as if he held the weight of the world on his shoulders. His knees were buckling, his back hunched over, and his melancholy expression cast a gloomy shadow over the entire room. It was on this day that the teacher evolved once more.

The two walked to his desk and the story came out. The boy had lost his mother to a fatal disease right before the school year started. He had just moved to the school district with his mother and grandparents and now, after her passing, was almost completely alone. So many emotions were coming out of him at once it was hard to keep track of them all. Misery...Rage...Confusion... They all were released upon the teacher like he was an emotional punching bag.

At the time, the teacher was unsure of how to react. He had never been truly connected with his students on a personal level, so the tragic disclosure came as a shock. He had never been well-acquainted with death throughout his life, save for a pet dog and a faceless aunt. But life worked in mysterious ways.

A few days after his attempts at consolation, followed by intermittent visits by the boy throughout the day, the teacher received a phone call. His wife was terminally ill. The teacher solemnly remembered the days after the message. He blatantly refused to teach, giving the students three days of free time while he stared fixatedly at his phone, eagerly waiting for and dreading a message from the hospital. On the fourth day, as the final bell rang ominously overhead, his phone buzzed with news.

The teacher returned to the classroom five days later with bloodshot eyes and a grim frown. It was the slowest day of his life. He remembered his students laughing behind his back as he wrote notes on the board, each successive laugh digging the

knife deeper into his back. Soon, he reached his breaking point, and yelled violently at the crowd. No one made a sound for the rest of the day.

When the final bell rang, the teacher collapsed at his desk, head in arms. The stoic mask he had flawlessly upheld throughout his career had finally shattered, revealing a steady stream of tears. The door opened. He told the intruder to leave. He wanted to be alone. He looked up as the sound of footsteps drew closer and closer. It was the boy.

For what seemed like an eternity, they said nothing. The teary eyes looked up to the freshly-dried pair that stood before them. Without warning, the boy reached over the desk and pulled the teacher in close. For the second time in his life, the roles had been reversed, but the play continued onward.

The rest of the year was a strange concoction of remembrance and acceptance. The two walked through hallways, classrooms, and even the park outside of school while talking about their respective losses. The more they walked, the more they learned to let go. They kept walking until the end of the year, when they reached a bridge that the teacher could not cross. The student had many more roads to travel, while the teacher had to return home.

So the student kept on walking, exiting the room and the teacher's life forever.

The teacher returned to reality and knew that his time had come. He remembered the letter on the top of the stack of papers on his desk, the death knell to his time in the room. After years of instruction and learning, and travelling down new roads with the students he had gained and lost over the years, it was time to leave the museum of memories that he had so deftly created.

With one last sigh, the teacher got up from his chair and walked slowly to the door, savoring every moment he could in the empty room. As he passed the desks, he started to hear clapping. It was slow at first, but then it grew like a fire. Nothing could stop the roar of the crowd now. He was the eternal composer who had just completed his lifelong symphony. Generations of hands appeared before him, filling the empty chairs and clapping fiercely for the memories, the lessons, the inspiration... He reached the door and looked back on his masterpiece. Hundreds of students had filled the room, cheering him on, demanding a standing ovation. They were young and old, tall and small, intelligent and undeniably dim-witted. But they all had been there, individual notes that coalesced into the teacher's masterful swan song.

Standing proudly before his loving crowd, with the nostalgic tears flowing uncontrollably down his face, the teacher took his last bow. Then, as the curtain fell and the door closed for the final time, the museum returned to its slumber and all of the lights went out.

-Charles Beers

First place in the Huntington Youth Writes Contest

Silent Lies

What was that?
I'm sorry I didn't hear?
Something's gotten in my ear
They don't seem to be clear

Your smile got in the way
That smile that tells me to turn
Don't stop, to run faraway
Is in my ear.
But on your lips
Are words so kind
Are they sincere?
I can't tell,
With that smile in my ear.

What was that sparkle?
I saw it in your eye.
That malicious sparkle,
That always held a lie.
Your voice says "its fine,"
As your hand slips in mine,
But there's still that sparkle in your eye.

What was that pain?
I felt it in my hand.
The hand You held.
I see the glimmer in your eye,
You know the pain was felt.
You still don't let go.
I see your lips form the words,
"Don't say no,"
As the darkness flickers
Through your mind.

Your teeth whisper,
"I love you my dear,"
But I can't hear your sweet lies,
With your smile in my ear,
And that sparkle in your eyes.

-Anne Glackin



-Ariella Danziger



-Victoria Martin

710 Thugs

I am the supervisor,
Of the 710 thugs for hire,
We live in a giant crystal spire,
Occasionally someone jumps off.

But the thugs don't give a damn,
Cause we was busy eatin' ham,
With special guest goddamn Uncle Sam.
There's a mattress on bottom so the jumpers land soft.

- Ron Merrick

THE SEASONS

Winter weather is so cold and chilly.
Hot chocolate keeps us toasty and warm.
We play in the snow and act so silly.
We stay inside when there is a bad storm.
Summer is so hot I like it a lot!
Iced tea and lemonade are summer needs.
I go swimming, then tan at my beach spot.
Even though you're off don't forget school deeds.
The pretty flowers spring up from the ground.
The animals wake up from their slumber.
The delightful kids start to play around.
The breeze feels as cool as a cucumber.
Its spring and winter and summer not fall.
Only four seasons and we love them all.

-Created by Mrs. Colica's Period 4 English Class



-Aaron Feltman



-Ally Berwick

Curse me

Curse my eyes for seeing something that was not there,
Curse my mouth for saying the wrong words,
Curse my mind for thinking something may happen,
Curse my feet for walking away,
Curse my fingers for typing those words,
Curse my shoulders that you put your arm around, but I brushed off,
Curse my tongue for not saying "good-bye,"
Curse my hope for believing something untrue,
Curse my heart for loving you.

-Mary Pulizzotto

The Final Copy

He couldn't tell how long he'd been listening to the lawn mower drone on. He was lying in bed hearing it oscillate between the sides of his neighbors' lawn. Was it just his imagination? Of course not, he knew once he got up and looked out the window he'd see his not quite elderly neighbor, Fred or some other name made generic by the baby boomer generation, bouncing off the edges of his property like a fairly wrinkled ping pong ball in slow motion.

The softness of the bed threatened to cocoon him in tranquility and keep him horizontal but he managed to overcome it, he wanted to see what was going on in the outside world. The room he was in resembled his usual bedroom, except on this occasion the furnishing was a lot more sparse. He didn't think anything of it. Sitting up he threw the blankets off his body and immediately noticed something strange. "I never go to sleep in anything other than pajamas," he thought. "Maybe I got really drunk last night and forgot. Speaking of which. . . last night?" However hard he thought and tried to remember he couldn't rationalize his current state of dress. He had never slept in a button-down, with jeans *and* socks before, just plain weird. His stomach growled violently, begging to be filled. This momentarily took his mind off the growing confusion.

He thought about his next move; downstairs and straight to the fridge where he'd fix himself a grand bowl of cereal to shut his stomach up. When he reached the top step and prepared to make his descent, the nonsense returned. On any ordinary day the ground floor would be filled with light coming in mostly through the living room's bay windows and the sliding glass doors of the sun porch. On this late spring day in the early afternoon there was no light downstairs. Not a peep, not a shred - pitch blackness. His curiosity forced him to investigate. Wary of any unwanted guests he kept the volume of his footfalls to a minimum.

When he was about two steps from the bottom something hard clobbered him in the head. He crumpled to the floor, sliding down the remaining steps on his backside. It wasn't what he had feared - an intruder swinging a baseball bat or some other blunt object. The impact to his upper face had had no force behind it, which can only mean one thing; he had to have walked in to something. But there had always been plenty of head space in that same exact spot until now. This was absurd. He swiveled his head to try and get his bearings but he was confounded. Lost in his own house? After a second take of the room he realized where he was.

The circular window in his attic had always reminded him of the small port-holes that lined the lower decks of the *Titanic*. It wasn't an especially large attic; here he must crawl to get anywhere. He wheeled around to make sure he had just gone *down* to get to his attic and not the traditional way of *up*. Yet he wasn't mistaken. He just descended to the third floor of his house, from the second floor. That oddity coupled with the attic's low ceiling explained the growing lump on his forehead, but not why when he looked out of the house's roundest window it had changed to night time. The sun had been replaced by the much milder glows of a crescent moon and the handful of stars that can be seen in spite of suburbia's light pollution. Knowing he wouldn't find any answers in his attic, where only a midget could live comfortably, he began to feel around the floor for the latch that would allow a ladder to swing out

of the second floor ceiling. He figured he can only descend from the attic and the thought of going back *up* to his second floor and into the daytime threatened to tear his mind apart.

After a while of patting down the floor like it was going through airport security he found the latch that would allow the stairs, and himself, to be released from the attic. He had to kick the latch open; it's had rusted shut. A violent lurch followed by a rusty metallic purr and a rectangular hole revealed the darkened second floor to the baffled observer. He accepted the fold-out steps' invitation and slowly worked his way down to a place that precisely resembled where he had started the day-then-night's misadventures.

The night time edition of the second floor of his house was deathly quiet. The door to his room was shut as it always was at this time of night. "What time *is* it? Have I gone back in time? Maybe when I hit my head I knocked myself out and that's where all the time has gone. But how the hell am I still only upstairs?" These unanswerable questions bounced around the inside of his skull like his lawn-mowing neighbor had been doing when he was *upstairs* earlier. The violent vibrations of hunger called him downstairs once more. He walked wearily to the top of his stairs clutching his abdomen, when maybe he should've been clutching his head. What he saw at the bottom of those stairs not only terrified him to his core but also made him realize he wasn't going enjoy that scintillating bowl of honey nut Cheerios any time soon, or ever.

"What? Holy shit," was the best response he could muster at other worldly sight of his attic, this time brimming with sunlight, at the foot of his steps. Going upstairs, and back in to the darker of the two attics was not appealing to this particular caged animal. He trudged downwards, wondering if he was really going upwards. He had no clue what his own house had in store for him but at this point, all he really cared about was shoveling some calories down his throat. "Maybe when I eat, the food won't go to my stomach it'll just go to my brain instead, because for no reason at all they've switched places therefore cutting of my food's access to my stomach altogether . . . If eating were like the current situation in my house I would eat my food, then puke it up and then eat that puke, vomit some more and so on and so on, a never ending cycle recycling my own barf. . ." Somehow that thought managed to cheer him up, even elicit a laugh from the starving boy.

" . . . Wouldn't there have to be an original puke? That food has to get into my stomach somehow . . . Right?"

He decided he had no good reason to hang around the attic this time. Getting down the stairs was a lot easier in the daylight, but as his head was about duck below the level of the floor and pass in to the realm of the second floor he noticed a few boxes at the end of the attic, opposite the porthole window, that had been moved as if to make room for something new. The boxes themselves blocked whatever had been added to the attic space from his sight. It was no cause for concern, but seeing those misplaced boxes gave him a strange sense of having moved them himself, almost like *déjà vu*.

"No, not again," he mumbled out loud as peered down his front staircase into

the darkened abyss of his attic. He decided he would stay in the day time. “Maybe if I go back to sleep this will all just go away, I’ll wake up and realize it was all a dream.” That was not the case.

He walked in to his bedroom and over to the window where he’d observed his next door neighbor cutting the grass. He began to daydream. The surreality of the day (and night) was getting to him when his train of thought was rudely interrupted by his neighbor.

“Goddamn it! Why won’t you start?!” the neighbor yelled vainly at his stubborn piece of machinery.

“You should try priming it, dumb ass,” he thought, answering the rhetorical question. As he watched, his neighbor followed his silent suggestion after a bit of a tantrum. His eyes began to scan the lawn of the man he was observing. The grass was tall, too tall. Clearly it hadn’t been cut yet.

He wanted to sit down on his bed and grasp the situation; but he couldn’t because somebody else was lying in it. He stood there, looking at an exact physical copy of himself, peacefully asleep, nestled in *his* blankets, and completely unaware of the imminent lawn mowing about to take place right outside of his window. His mind went blank at the sight. It was too much for him to process all at once.

The copy’s breathing began to deepen and his eyes were moving behind his closed lids. He was asleep but not for much longer. The *original* darted out the room. He couldn’t go down because that’s where his copy would go, so he went back up into the day time attic. He lay flat on the attic floor and reached down to grab one of the outstretched steps. He yanked as hard as he could until this port of entry was fully concealed; he did not want to give the duplicate any inkling as to his whereabouts or even his existence. While plotting his next move it occurred to him that what he just experienced could have been going on in his room just before he woke. He knew it was only a matter of time before he encountered another version of himself, likely descending just as he had been moments earlier. “Maybe if I hide behind the boxes I can wait for me to pass through the attic and when I do I’ll confront me and break the cycle. Brilliant,” he planned and he thought the plan was good. He failed to realize that when *he* himself had passed through the attic no such thing had happened.

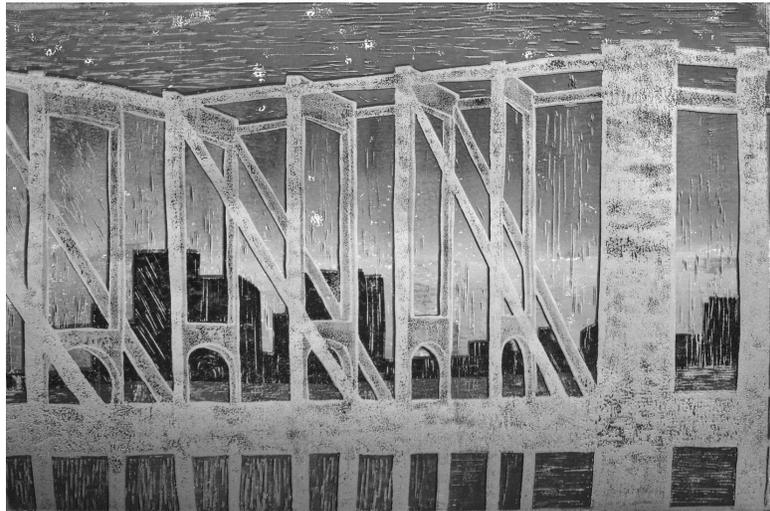
He scuttled over to behind the low wall of cardboard boxes and waited to spring his trap. Through the floor he could hear himself leave his room and began the journey into a dark attic. It wasn’t the clattering vibrations of approaching footsteps that he expected that scared the shit out of him, it was warm, firm grasp of *his* own hand reaching around from behind and clasping over his mouth. Overpowered by the element of surprise he was dragged back into the recesses of the attic. He could feel *his* own warm breath in his ear, *he* whispered, “If anyone is gonna cut the loop and end this bullshit, it’s gonna be me.”

-Gabe Smith

FUN THINGS TO DO

Sports are a good source of inspiration.
In order to play we must all compete.
To win games you need determination.
To come out on the top we must defeat.
I put on my beats, choose a random song.
It finished, now I choose another one.
Put on my favorite, it's really long.
Listening to music is so much fun!
I went to the mall and bought something blue.
I bought a new shirt for 50 dollars.
Blue is the color of our high school crew.
When I see Becca at school she hollers.
I play a lot of sports in the hot sun.
Sports, video games, and music are all fun

-Created by Mrs. Colica's Period 5 English Class



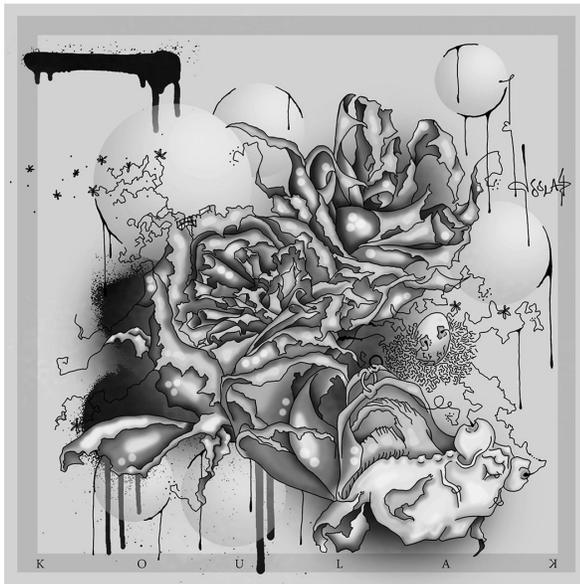
-Leah Butz

Eternal

I will never stop loving you more than life itself
Even when I'm long and gone, my heart will still be
longing
for the
Light of my life,
in this
Dark and bitter earth
with all that's left of me.

My love will survive a thousand years,
or until I see you again
to hold you in my arms again
and say
I love you.
Only then can I go on
knowing my love is eternal.
No matter what is to come, my heart will
beat for you;
just tell me you feel the same.

-Jack Kitzen



-Ekaterina Koulakova

White Room

I stand in a white room. It's bright, and everything you see is white. It's completely empty other than a pedestal with a work of art sitting upon it. It's bright red. We call it a "heart". It's almost like a piggy bank. People come by to see it, put their spare change in and sometimes stay for a while. Some stay longer than others. Some appreciate the sculpture more than others. Some put in more spare change than others do. I guess they just care more. Some people stand close to the heart. I regulate who I trust to stand closer, and who must keep their distance.

There are some people I remember who have broken the heart before. Today, you can see the cracks in the ceramic and shiny red glaze. Yet, some people still believe it's beautiful.

I remember one boy, a young teenager, came in once, and observed the sculpture, as others did. He was a good looking young man with bright blue eyes and medium length brown hair. He seemed like the jock-type. Going out for the football team and wearing shorts year-round. A player, not just on the field. I saw him take the heart. I didn't know exactly what to do, but for some reason I trusted him with it. It was shiny, new, and unbroken at the time. But slowly I see his grasp tightening and slowly cracking it with his strong bare hands. Some of the pieces cut his hand though, almost a way of defending itself from further harm. I try to get the heart out of his grasp, but I can't. And when I do obtain it again, he just steals it all over again, and squeezes and cracks it more.

I remember, too, that right before he left the room, he put it back onto the pedestal and dusted it off. He never apologized, but at least he cleaned it up. It was still cracked, though. Just as he was leaving, he looked at me, gave me a smile, picked up the heart for the last time, and deliberately dropped it on the ground. It shattered into pieces. I was in shock. He then smiled and walked away and left me to fix the heart on my own. Some other people entered the room to help, but I shooed most of them away.

For a while, I wouldn't let anyone in to see it, or to come close to it. Some people snuck in and had gotten close anyway, which did help my trust with it... slightly. Very few people are allowed in the room at all after that. It was mostly just me in the bright white, clean room, with the almost-fixed but broken heart, and the few people I didn't push away.

I remember another boy too, who I finally allowed into the room, and close to the heart. He was an older teenager, he too had blue eyes. He was taller than the last boy, too. His look was very different. Leather jackets, guitar case (rather than a lacrosse stick), and a caring attitude, which I didn't see in the previous boy. He helped to fix the heart, too, though it never looks the same as it once was.

Eventually, he got me to trust him, too. He told me the heart was fine and great, despite the cracks and the tough security to come and see it. He then asked to hold the heart. I denied. I was too afraid of it breaking again, even though he seemed to be a generally better person. He took it anyways, despite my rejection, but

he took it in careful hands. At first, I kept telling him to put it back. Then, after a while, I trusted again. Some of the cracks were less noticeable, and the heart shined a little brighter, because the heart saw (or at least it thought) he cared.

One day, another tourist told me something, though. Just as I thought I might be able to step out of this white room with the white floors and see the art in his room, the girl she told me she had it. As she told me this, the heart slipped out of his hands, like he didn't even know he was holding it. I hear the familiar sound of breaking ceramic, almost like glass.

"Oops, sorry," he says, though I can't really tell whether he truly cares about it or not... Not anymore.

When he tries to pick up the pieces, I push him away. I push the girl who told me away, too, even though I really tried not to. She was a frequent visitor, and she's seen the heart up close, too.

These cracks eventually repaired themselves as the last did. Heck, the damages weren't even half as bad as the first guy, but it was broken all the same. Though it's put back together, you can still see exactly where it was severed.

People still appreciate the heart's beauty. Some stay in the white room with the white walls, some leave. Some are distant to the heart and some are closer. The one's who are closer are more dangerous to damage it, though, which is why so few people are allowed so close. But, I guess the breaks, cracks and tears give it character, and makes the piece more interesting. I know I will be fooled again... It won't be the last time it breaks, I'm sure. But it's worth trusting someone with it just to leave and see the other art pieces! It hasn't happened yet... I hope it will.

Come by, it's a beautiful sight to see... If you can make it into the white room.

-Mary Pulizzotto



-Nina Cartwright

The Tale of the Crown of Corruption

The tale of the Crown of Corruption is one that marks back to the beginning of existence. Before humans ever walked the earth, the world was filled with fierce orcs, dragons, witches, and the undead. Amongst all these beasts and creatures, there was one more insightful and devious than the rest. He was a wicked undead mage, known as Olgar. He spent his days in an ancient igneous cave, isolated from the rest of the world. Olgar was a master of black magic and the crafting of spells. This creature was truly evil. His only desires were to kill and cause havoc. He spent his nights strolling the lands, killing children with his perennial selection of sickening tactics, and torturing the innocent. The only men who were safe were the greedy and corrupt. Olgar had all the power in the world, but the thing he wanted most was invincibility. His only fear was death. He spent years fighting the fact that he would one day die, looking for loop holes. He knew he had the power to one day find out the secret to an everlasting life. After traveling all around the world gathering different resources and performing hundreds of test experiments, the spell was complete. When he knew death was creeping near, he put his spell to use. He melted down all of the treasures he obtained over the years and forged a crown with it. He then used the Glorious Elder Pot, which he stole from a cult of witches. He threw an orc's tooth, some dragon scales, a witch's eyeball and some other things into the pot and watched as it all sizzled together. Olgar then drank this potion and cast the spell on himself, while tightly gripping his crown. He knew that performing this ritual would be the end of his life, but this would not be his demise. As his body crumbled, his soul was ejected into the crown. His very being consumed of evil was transported, and there it lingered, waiting for the opportunity to be reborn.

Years later, a mass extinction of all life on earth occurred. A man and a woman, later known as Locke and Hollis, were the first humans to be born. With their origins unknown, they grew from infancy to adulthood in mere days. Their minds and bodies matured at rapid rates. The two grew very wise and acquainted with one another. They obtained all of the knowledge of necessities. Locke used his godly strength and athletic abilities to hunt boar and buffalo. Hollis would collect nutritious berries and plants to make salads. The two lived very healthy, happy lives. There was a mysterious attraction that drew the two together. It was like their insides were filled with magnets, drawing one to the other. Locke spent his days questioning his existence. *Why do I live? What are these feelings I possess?* These were a few of the thoughts constantly racing through his head. Hollis, on the other hand, felt no need for inquiry. She was content living a simple life, enjoying the world around her and taking in the bliss of nature and all of its beauty.

One afternoon, Locke went out to the fields in search of dinner, while Hollis stayed behind, preparing a masterful salad. There were no buffalo in sight, so Locke went into the woods to explore. After about an hour of searching, the sun began to disappear under the tall pine trees. Locke could not go home empty handed; he had too much pride to let the boars get the best of him. He began a voyage deep into the woods, further than he had ever gone before. The environment drastically changed as he continued walking. Everything appeared so dark and gloomy to him. Locke was beginning to feel a new emotion. He felt fear for the first time. Chills ran up and down his spine, like little spiders. He figured missing one meal wouldn't be the end of the world, so he turned to walk back home. That's when he saw the beam of light. There

was a glimmering cave in front of him, with a blue glow deep inside. This cave was once the home of Olgar. This light had its own gravitational pull, dragging Locke in against his will. Locke went further and further into the dark cave. Finally, he reached the light. Once Locke laid his eyes on the beautiful treasure, he was hooked. There was a golden crown, forged with shimmering jewels. Suddenly, whispers began to bounce off the walls of the cave. "Leave before it's too late, my son," echoed over and over again. The beauty was too much to behold. Locke ignored the whispers and placed the crown on his head. Locke was now nothing more than Olgar's minion. He suddenly felt a rush of extreme power take hold inside himself. He was no longer just a man. He felt as if he was god. He was corrupted by the evil soul that had obtained the crown. All of the questions he so heavily desired answers for were revealed. He had been born to rule the world.

From that day on, the world underwent a massive change. Locke, with his unlimited power, created new life. The population soared to hundreds of people. The essence of living wasn't to enjoy life, but to waste away in slavery. The people were all peasants for Locke's needs. He had them working 20 hours a day, building temples and sculptures for their "god". Hollis was no longer of use to Locke, so she became one of the rest. His passionate feelings for her were iced out by the evil that festered inside the crown. This crown sat sturdily on his head, day in and day out. It had corrupted his blood, making him power hungry. He could never have enough. This is when he decided to challenge the man who created him. He envied God's power. Locke truly believed he was deserving of the position. He went to the summit of the Gondalocke Mountain, overlooking the vast sea, and yelled to the heavens, "Almighty God, you are nothing more than one of these ignorant slaves. You are sitting on the throne that belongs to me! Come down here and face me you vile beast! I do not fear the inferior! I am the deserving God! I am the almighty! I AM THE CHOSEN ONE!!" As Locke continued with his heated boasting, God was present, listening to every word. He could not believe what he was hearing. His first son, the man he created to start the human race, had become cold-blooded. God was absolutely appalled and almost lost faith in the human race as a whole. "The man I created with my very hands has turned on me?! He is not deserving of life!" Right then, while Locke was mid-sentence ranting, a massive bolt of lightning, sent from God himself, struck him. He fell off the mountain, plummeting into the frozen ocean. As he fell to his demise, Olgar's soul went back into the crown, into hibernation. Locke's soul was finally free and elegantly rose to heaven. Locke may have died, but the evil inside the crown was not tarnished. The world continued to prosper, without Locke. The population steadily increased and civilizations developed. As the world went on, Olgar laid patiently in the crown, on the ocean floor, waiting for the day someone stumbled upon it again.

About 250 years later, the crown was found. It was a beautiful day and Gump, a well-known fisherman, went deep into the sea, voyaging for big fish. Once he found a region swelling with tuna, he threw his net into the water. After some time, he dragged the net up. Through all the fish, there was a gold light shimmering. He dug through the wet, slimy fins until he found it. After polishing it off, the luxurious crown was recognizable, making Gump jump for joy. He anxiously drove the boat back to shore, to find out the crown's value. By the time he reached the dock, the sun had already set, so he figured he would go to the merchant the next morning. That night, he went home to his family, who he loved so dearly, and told them all about his find. They were all so excited and stunned by the pure beauty of the crown. Gump's

little daughter said, "Daddy put it on, I want to see how you look." So Gump placed the crown on his head. Right then, he went numb. His mind was blank and his body felt nonexistent. Gump's whole world dispersed into thin air, as if he was no longer alive. His children and wife just looked at him, very frightened. His wife Carole said in a worried voice, "Gump are you ok?" He snapped out of his trance, but Gump was not the same man he was before putting on the cursed crown. Olgar was inside of him, pulling the strings of his brain. Gump acted very distant and strange for the rest of the evening. When he woke up the next morning, Gump was a completely different man. He felt like the king of the universe. He did not care about the well-being of his family; the only thing that mattered was himself. Olgar was furious after being restrained inside the crown for hundreds of years. His rage was a pit of fire, burning holes in Gump's brain. He wanted the pleasure of causing destruction.

Gump left his home and went from one village to the next, leaving nothing but ashes and dead bodies behind. He spewed curses across the seas, so that all the fish would shrivel and decompose into bones. He went into the forest and drained all of the life out of the plants and trees, so that nothing but roots and fossils were left behind. Everywhere Gump went, death followed. God took notice to Gump's actions and recognized them as something he once saw hundreds of years ago. He knew Olgar had returned, and he was going to put a stop to him once and for all. God came down to earth in a flash of light and found Gump terrorizing a town. Through Gump, Olgar made eye contact with God and was not fazed by his immense power, or glowing presence. He was overwhelmed with joy at the opportunity to kill the creator of all life. The final face off was about to begin! God began shooting lightning bolts at Olgar, but he had an invisible shield braced. Olgar then cast hell hounds to attack God, while blasting spell after spell at him. His magic was much stronger than God had imagined. Olgar proved himself to be a worthy opponent. Shimmering lights of fire and electricity were bursting throughout the air. After hours of back-and-forth fighting, God came out on top. He was able to extract the evil soul from Gump's body, using his staff of justice, and destroyed it along with the crown. Gump was able to return to his family with nothing more than a few scratches and a bad headache. The world was finally free from Olgar's wicked soul. The world entered an era of peace and harmony. That was, until the dinosaurs came along....

-Jon Stern

Unsatisfied: A Gift or A Burden

Each dream, want and wonder all encompasses the same gratifying idea of love, hope and togetherness. Society allows us to believe that without someone by your side you are destined to be lonely and in pain. That pain is not something that we should wish upon anybody, because the feeling of being unwanted, unloved, and unneeded is something that even the darkest demon should never have to feel. Life is a gift filled with great friends, food, enjoyment and marvels. But even with all of these beautiful items surrounding us, it is never good enough. There is always something missing. In this world nothing is deemed to be perfection. That is why there is always a desire to get more, be better, and show off, while disregarding the roses that we so often forget to smell. The journey and path is no longer liberating or serene, it is merely the way to the finish line, the end goal. To complete the race, job and life is the true prize. Life is not about the trophy it is about the fun you have, the things you learn, and the people you meet along the way. So instead of sulking in loneliness, jump into the world with a new outlook, always excited for what there is to come because there is always something more on your journey.

- Lena Scarpulla



-Chelsea Connell



-Erica Vasquez

A Days Dream

What's running through my mind right now? Nothing. Simply nothing. Now I'm in a room. There's nothing on the door except my name. They're studying me in the room, three doors down. All I hear is the repetitive sounds of my beating heart and steady breathing. The same sounds over and over again are enough to drive a sane man right to the mental hospital. It feels like I've been in here forever, too. The seconds tick by at a snail's pace. Seconds turn into minutes; minutes into hours. Hours and hours of repetitive breathing. Hours and hours of repetitive beating. Then, for the first time in what felt like centuries, someone finally came into the room. The person starts to walk in and I feel a sense of hope. There she was. For the first time in eons, there she was. My best friend. There she was. We look into each other's eyes and she gives me the best hug of my life. There's hope. Relief. Happiness. Possibly the best hour of my life. But those 60 minutes felt like 60 seconds. In what felt like a split second, she walked in and walked out. Yet again, my life went to shit. I was completely alone, accompanied only by the sound of my beating heart and steady breathing. Again, someone walks in. I jump up, hoping it to be her again. But it was the doctor. He walked in and said something. Of course I wasn't listening though. I was too buried within my thoughts. He snaps me out of it. He explains it to me. Something about spreading, I think. Can't think of it right off the top of my head. After that, he walks out again. For the third time I was left alone. The lights are turned off. The doctors leave the clipboard on the white door. "Patient: Arias, John. Reason for stay: Clinical Depression. Cure: None.

-John Arias

My Garage

After a long, hard day at school, I walk home, put my books down and change into my well-worn work clothes. Wearing a greasy shop apron and torn-up jeans, I prepare for what projects await me in my garage. More often than not, I am greeted by a cluttered mess left over from the previous night's project, or the remnants of my brothers' projects. Regardless of how I find my garage, I begin wherever I previously left off, be it grinding 60 year old patch of pitted sheet metal or bending my own shift levers for my tractors. It is at these moments I realize where I truly belong: my garage. My garage allows me to complete complex and arduous projects that most people wouldn't dare go near. Often times, I take apart, tinker with, and work on old, non-running engines, farm tools, and tractors; tools that served an important purpose to past generations and operators. My garage provides me the perfect place to rebuild, restore, and revitalize these historic pieces of machinery.

My garage is split into three sections, all designed to meet the needs of my everyday ventures. One area is devoted to the storage of my hardware and collection of old tools, pliers, wrenches, and shop equipment. I use this equipment daily to service and take apart the various projects stored within the rest of my garage. The second area is where I spend most of my time; the work benches. I have two adjacent work benches that are always littered with various components from past projects and current restorations. As you could imagine, these work benches are the messiest areas of the garage because I often work on multiple projects simultaneously, within the same table space. With just a glimpse of the black splotches and deep markings that inhabit the surface of these tables, you could easily see how much hard work, blood, sweat and tears go into each project. The third and largest section of my garage is designated as a showroom for all my completed accomplishments and successful restoration projects including the nearly fifty engines, tractors, and pieces of farm equipment I own. One of the main showpieces is my 1949 Oliver 88 tractor which I restored to like-new condition from its prior state of disrepair on a neglected piece of farm land.

In my garage, I feel exhilarated. This is where I can venture outside my comfort zone and work with torches, grinders, and milling machines to complete complicated restorations. My garage has been my home away from home for most of my life. I practically grew up there, watching and learning from my father and older siblings as they worked on weekend projects. As a young boy, I often played with tools and machines rather than toys and video games. Throughout my life I have developed a mechanical mindset and the confidence to work with practically any material. From modifying engines to be more efficient, to designing new features for equipment that improve operation and use, my garage is always there for me. All that takes place in my garage continues to add new knowledge to my repertoire of mechanical intelligence.

My garage has been, and continues to be, a very meaningful and important place to me. My garage gives me the space to truly grow and develop who I am as a person and push my boundaries of learning. In my garage, I can see all of my great mechanical accomplishments, successes and even failures. My projects represent all the hard work that I put into accomplishing my goals and I am very thankful that the outcomes continue to surprise others. The process of hard work and attention to detail has helped me learn from experience and has made me the person I am today: a mechanically inclined individual and avid collector, just following my passions and dreams.

-Thomas Kouttron

Second Place in the Huntington Youth Writes Contest

Mars is Heaven: Ray Bradbury

Like any other young boy, Patrick Candor dreamed of the impossible. Ever since his third grade teacher showed the class a documentary about life on Mars, Patrick became fascinated with planet Mars. The thought of there being people, even families on a whole different planet bewildered him. Like any other young boy, Patrick Triste liked to pretend. He'd pretend he's living on the marvelous planet of Mars, sitting around a table with his Mars-family eating spectacular Mars-food that his Mars-mother cooked up for him. But Patrick Triste did not live on Mars. He lived in apartment 606 on West 17th street. There was no Mars-family either, just his father and the occasional rat that wandered through the apartment. He never ate spectacular Mars-food, but he was lucky if he received supper that evening. Unlike any other young boy, Patrick Candor did not cry. He did not cry when his mother died. He did not cry when father came home angry and confused, reeking of booze and sweat. Patrick did not believe he was really a nine year old boy from Earth. He is a boy stuck on the planet of Earth, a prisoner forever doomed to this life. Every night he goes to bed dreaming about a life that is not his, with his mother's last words re-playing in his head. "It'll all get better soon," she whispered on her death bed, quietly enough for only Patrick to hear. *But when will what get better?* 11:32pm, May 3rd, 1989, head trauma, age 10. As his last breath escapes his lips, Patrick Candor is free.

-Isabel Glasso

A Short Story

The bell rings and I brace myself for math class. I could feel my body tense up and I start to get scared. There was no test or pop quiz to be sacred about, instead a jerk was waiting to ruin someone's day. It wasn't just one day, it's been going on for weeks. I sat at my desk and took a deep breath, I looked at their desk. It was empty. Maybe today I would be spared from the never ending tormenting. Class started and I started on the "Do Now", still the desk was empty. I smiled, a rare event for me. The smile faded when the seat was filled ten minutes after class started.

"You're so useless."

"You got that question wrong? You must be so stupid!"

"You got a 75 on the quiz? Why do you even bother staying in school?"

"There is no way a college would want you with *those* grades, they'd rather have someone without a pea sized brain."

"Don't get too excited about your test, you know that you failed miserably."

The list could go on for a while, those are just a few I could remember. When the bell finally rang, I decided I had enough of these comments. I walked up to the teacher and told them all about today, and hoped the kid would finally get what they deserved. All the teacher had to say was "I'm sorry, I didn't see it. I'll keep an eye out

deserved. All the teacher had to say was “I’m sorry, I didn’t see it. I’ll keep an eye out for tomorrow.” I heard that from every teacher since the beginning. I stormed out of the classroom and went to my next class, art. In art, there was a group of kids who would ruin my art and comment on things about me such as:

“Wow, you look like the garbage can threw up on you.”

“You’re so ugly, you’ll never have any friends.”

“You look like you need a salad.”

They could get pretty cruel, but I’ll leave the cruel stuff out so I don’t get sick. When I got home I cried into my pillow. I stayed there for a few hours listening to some songs, reading a book or just staring at the ceiling. At one point, I wished it would fall down on me. I looked outside the window and saw a shooting star. Cliché, I know. I made a wish, “I wish I knew why those kids are bullying me.” I whispered. I kept my eyes locked on the star until it faded out of the sky.

The next day of school I thought I was going to lose it. I felt like I was going to cry at any given moment. The dreaded math class. I sat down at my desk and held my breath, waiting for cold words to cut me like a knife. The teacher hands out the test from last week, and the kids pass them down. I wait for my test to be handed to me, along with a comment on my intelligence. My test is silently passed to me. I look at the grade, I got a 100! I never failed the class, but seeing the perfect grade made me feel happy. The kid next to me looks at my test, and then theirs. They got a 75. The kid looked at me ready with an evil smirk. “My parents pressure me to get better grades.” They said in an insulting tone. I was confused at the statement, was that supposed to be an insult or confession? They were also confused and tried again “My older brother has straight A’s, and I have to live up to that.” It was said in a similar tone. “Nobody’s perfect,” I said shyly “and no one should be under those expectations.” Math was oddly silent from then to the end of class. I walked out of the class and I was on my way to art when the kid stopped me. “Why weren’t you mean to me?” they asked, “I’m not a mean person.” I answered. I kept walking to art when they stopped me again. “Are you going to tell anyone?” they asked quietly, “Why would I?” I asked. “I’ve been such a jerk to you, why wouldn’t you?” they said. I didn’t really have an answer for that, but I thought of something. “If you fight fire with fire, you only get more fire. If you fight fire with water, maybe we could reach a middle ground.” I said and continued to art class.

The kids were smearing clay all over a picture I painted, I should have guessed it. This time it was something different. That was a portrait of my grandfather who passed away almost a month ago. “WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?” I screamed, it was so loud that I silenced the crowd and classroom. I could feel tears run down my cheeks, “WHY ARE YOU DOING THAT TO MY GRANDFATHER’S PORTRAIT?” I screamed. The kid’s faces turned pale. They all had something to say, but not what I expected.

“I only joined them because they threatened to do *that* to my work. Now that I see what we did, it was stupid to do.” Said the first kid.

“I’m the youngest of a big family, I needed a way to get some sort of attention. But this isn’t the type of attention I should be looking for.” Said the second.

“I get super jealous of other people’s work, instead of improving on my own work I chose to destroy others. Why did I do that?” Said the third.

“I needed some sort of approval in this class, this was the wrong way to find it.” Said the fourth.

The last kid was the leader, who started to glow red. Everyone looked at them waiting for them to say something, anything. Everyone who spoke so far all had the same reaction as the kid in math class. Not even the teacher had anything to say, the room was still. The leader’s eyes darted around the room, perhaps looking for an escape. The leader had tears running down their face, then spoke only two words “I’m sorry.”

All eyes fell on me. I wiped the tears from my face. “I can’t say this is ok, and it will be very hard to forgive. That portrait was of my grandfather who died last month, and that was my way of honoring him.” The class gasped, so did the kids in the group. I continued “If you had all of that crap going on in your lives, wouldn’t it be easier to express that in your art rather than ruining mine?” Again silence.

“I’m so sorry... I didn’t know how important that was to you.”

The leader of the group said it quietly, but I heard it. The tears ran down their face, I knew they meant that apology. I walked up and gave them a hug. “I never realized how much of a jerk I was, and how I forced others to be just like jerks too.” The leader whispered. They finally let go from the hug. “Let’s fix everything up.” I said. For the rest of the class kids told me that they were sorry for my loss, helped remove the clay from the portrait, and even told me about things that were rough in their lives. After that, art turned into a confession-thing on Fridays. The math bully became the best math tutor and a good friend. The group of kids at art shortly dispersed and I became friends with the leader. The kids learned how to express themselves in the art they created. My wish upon the star came true, and I made a few friends that I thought were jerks.

My next wish is that bullying would stop altogether. Unfortunately, wishing upon a star can’t solve everyone’s problems. Being a jerk to someone will never make you feel better and won’t help in any way. Please tell an adult or parent if someone you know is being a bully, and don’t be a by-stander! I would have been spared the tears from art class if a student told the teacher what the group was doing to my portrait. I also wouldn’t be as scared to enter math class if any of the kids around me had spoken up. I should have spoken up earlier as well. I hope by sharing this story, you can help to stop bullying with me.

A note from the author:

I would like to express that I have been bullied when I was younger, but I do not have a direct experience as expressed in the story. I wrote the story to be from the perspective of anyone who has been bullied or for a bully to see how it can affect someone that they have been jeering. I also wrote this story to provide an image that instead of jeering another student, a “bully” can find a more constructive way of expressing how they feel (such as the “group” in the art class, who learned to express themselves in art). Thank you for reading!

-Jessica Pulizzotto

Crash

Oh, take me back to the start,
When you were dimples and smiles,
And I was a starry-eyed dreamer.
It began with, “Hello,”
And it took that one word to become ad-
dicted to you.
You had a bit of the universe radiating
out of you,
As breathtaking and ethereal as the night
sky.
And I’m sorry.
Things didn’t end the way we’d hope.
I think about how much I loved you,
And how you loved me.
Oh, what a shame
What a rainy ending given to a perfect
day.
Because nothing ends poetically.
It just ends.
I keep the things you wrote for me
Locked in a tiny box in my heart
To remind me on my loneliest days that
you once loved me back.
When you were the radiating light in my
life.
When I was a mess of a dreamer
With the nerve to adore you
Here I am,
Praying that the love in your heart wasn’t
replaced with hate.

I’m losing sleep, wondering if you’re doing
the same thing over me.
Because you were once the beautiful boy
on the driver’s side,
The one who whispered “I love you,”
through the phone.
The one who left a permanent mark on
my heart.
When I saw your face today, I lost my
breath a little
But I didn’t collapse like I would’ve four
months ago.
Your face fell when you saw me,
But darling,
We can’t start the next chapter of our
lives
If we keep rereading the last one.
Who were we before we broke each other’s
hearts?
I can’t remember.

-Katy Dara

The Instruments of War

There was no end to the instrument wars, only stalemates. For 10,000 years the Band Empire and the Covenant of Strings had been battling over control of the galaxy and for superiority in the musical plane as a whole. No one knew how it had started, only that the other side was different, savage, ruthless, and that they needed to take over to bring order to the over 20,000 habitable planets that they knew of. The fighting touched nearly every one of these planets, more bitter and drawn out than ever thanks to the advancements in instrument technology.

Soldiers of the Empire used weaponry that drew power from their breathing and hearts and was able to hit targets from far away with searing plasma rounds. Sleek and thin Flutes and Clarinets fired rounds faster than the eye could spot them from miles away, and the goliath Tubas and Baritones released monstrous blasts that devastated everything around them. The Infantry used was comprised of Trumpets and French Horns, the more versatile and numerous instruments in the Empire. They were left in the front lines and fired large slow or small and fast blasts as needed.

Meanwhile, the warriors of the Covenant of Strings used melee instruments that required them to get close to the enemy. The smallest of these was the violin, which emitted a small and thin blade of energy that could be slashed quickly. Violas were sturdier and released a low vibration when striking that shattered nearly any armor. Cellos were used while mounted and had pointed energy blades at the very end to give them range. Finally, the Double Bass, the largest of the Covenants weapons, required two hands to wield. These had a single energy ax head at the top, and could chop through almost anything. All Covenant warriors were also equipped with bows, light and nimble blades that were able to deflect or parry if the wielder had the skill.

So, the two sides waged their war, turning the battlefield into a burning crater in the first couple of days. Each side fought and marched to different songs: when the fighting begins, the two songs create a cacophony of noise and confusion. This is all overseen by the solemn and supposedly impartial Drummers, lending beat and some illusion of order to the chaos of battle. Heaven forbid a battle occurs in a populated area, as the violent music is said to drive even the most docile noncombatants to mindless aggression. The actual cities are most often destroyed by the reverb from the battle.

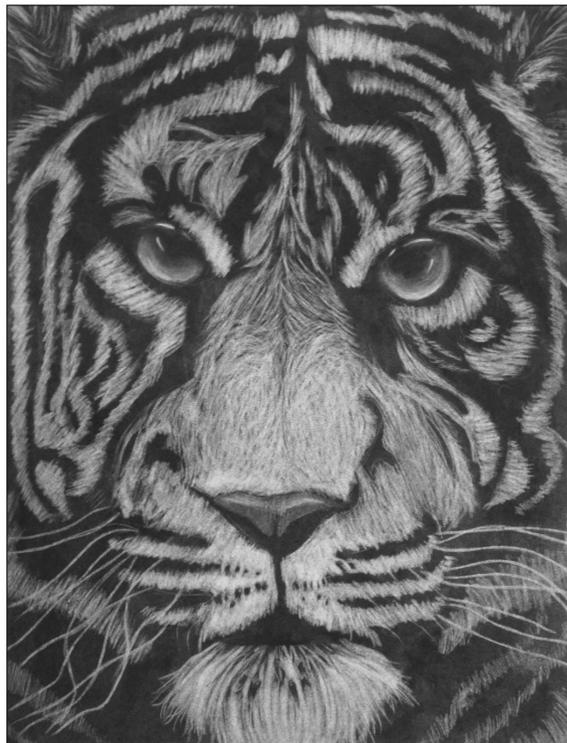
But it was not always this way. Once the Band Empire and the Covenant of Strings made music together and filled the entire galaxy with song. Old stories tell of this music being able to bring life to barren moons and transport the then unified peoples to the now unreachable corners of the galaxy in an instant. In short, the capabilities of unified melody were nothing short of magic.

This is where the histories of the two sides diverge. The Archives in the Empire's capital planet say that their Empress' only daughter was kidnapped in the night by Covenant scouts one night 10,000 years ago and that they attempted to marry her off to one of their nobles. The Covenant of Strings dismisses this as propaganda of the Empire. All the records in their Central Library tell a story of an ancient artifact that their people had been seeking for eons. According to them, on the same night as the princess was supposedly taken, their scouts found the artifact in one of the treasuries

of the Imperial city, but were unable to retrieve it. So the Empire fights for the child they lost and the royal line that was destroyed, while the Covenant fights to regain the treasure that was kept from them. Now the stories of past prosperity together are taboo and to even mention the term “orchestra winds” is a crime.

The war has gone on unbroken for all these thousands of years with no blotches on the arm’s records except for one battle. This more recent battle ended with all troops on both sides deserting, from the lowliest foot soldier to the highest general. The only account of the event comes from sensors in the area, as any civilians left along with the group of soldiers. The audio and visual picked up by the sensor shows the battle beginning normally and the sides preparing to play their competing melodies as once the Drummers start. But, by some strange twist of fate, the songs that the two sides played were the same, and the opposing armies found themselves accidentally making music together. Next the armies stop in their tracks as they realize what is going on, but they continue to play. Finally, the sides approach each other, not with the intent of combat, but combining into one group. Empire and Covenant troops enter the formations of a band and orchestra group that have not been used in thousands of years and walk off together, continuing to play together.

-Ben Herbert



-Lois Choi

The Disney Creed

After years of training, tracking and preparing, I'm finally ready to kill that crocodile! I try to sneak out of my room, but I get caught almost immediately by Wendy. "Peter, where are you going?" She asks. "I'm going for a walk." I lie, but Wendy saw right through it. "A walk?" Wendy asks suspiciously, "Uh, yeah. I need to check if there are any pirates around." I say. Wendy saw right through the lie. "Didn't Michel check an hour ago?" Wendy asks. I sigh. "I'm sorry Wendy, but I need to get rid of that crocodile once and for all." I admit. I look down in shame, and go back into my room. Wendy stops me and hands me a "kiss". "I'll miss you." Wendy says. I give Wendy a hug, "Thanks for understanding." I say. "Before you leave, the lost boys and I made something for you." Wendy says. What could it be? I kept this a secret since the beginning.

Wendy leaves my room and comes back with a green coat. I try it on and put up the hood. "What's this for?" I ask, "It'll hide your face a little, and will make it harder for the pirates to track you." Wendy explains. I admire my new coat by looking in my mirror. "Something's missing." I say. "What is it?" Wendy asks. I reach for my hat and remove the red feather from it. I attach the feather to the hood. "Now it's going to be obvious." Wendy says with slight disappointment. "I think it looks pretty good. Thanks Wendy!" I say. I turn around and see Wendy upset. "Why are you sad? Catching the crocodile is a good thing." I say. I sit on my bed with Wendy. "I don't want you to get hurt." Wendy mumbles while wiping away a tear. I stand up proudly and say "That crocodile could never catch me!" Wendy smiles and gives me hug for the last time. "Tinker Belle will make sure you make it home safely." I say "I will tell you when the crocodile is taken out." Wendy nods, and leaves.

I leave the hangout, and leave a note outside for when the lost boys return. I make sure I have everything I need. I have my dagger, a pouch of pixie dust, and enough food and water for the travels lying ahead. That's all I need, at least for now. I use a little pixie dust, and fly up to a tall tree. From there, I see almost all of Neverland. No pirates, no mermaids, just nothing. Only a few waves roll off onto the shore. What's happening to Neverland? I know this has to be the Crocodile's fault, all the trouble has been his doing. I take out the dagger and read the word engraved "Hook". I could turn back, but remembering all of the friends I've lost makes me want to fight more. This is what I need to do, this is my creed.

-Jessica Pulizzotto

Don't Make Me Lose You Too

I was four,
And you were an infant
We were happy
But not for long.

I was five
And watched in awe
As you took your first steps towards me.

I was seven
Dad left us alone for the first time
For a week

I was ten
And your tooth fell out
I cleaned up the blood
And lied about the tooth fairy

I was thirteen
You broke your arm
So you rode on the handlebars of my bike
To the hospital

I was seventeen
You couldn't stop reading, learning
While I dropped out of school to help Dad

I was twenty-two
When you left me alone
To pursue your dreams
I only cried when he couldn't see

I was twenty-six
When I begged you to come back
For only a few days
I'm sorry
About the fire

I never should have dragged you away.

Now I'm twenty-eight
And you're twenty-four
You grow cold in my arms
I hope that this is an awful dream
And that deep-seated emptiness threatens
to swallow me whole
But not for long.

-Katy Dara

Mysterious Image

Tall trees,
fully green leaves and
the tree as far as the edge can see

Silver stone path in a

w a v e

p a t t e r n

Old rusty key colored brown with a
little piece of r o p e at the end of it.

I take it and put it around my
wrist while holding it firmly

Small old rusty blue cup with a handle.

Take the cup
Water streaming calmly
Swim across

Down and smooth, because it'll be easier
than the other path

open yellowish Green open field Grass

Walk across

Six foot high

stone Wall

Climb over the wall

safely

Another open field but full Green Grass.

-Sarah Aloe

Winter Sleep

It keeps coming back to me. I remember this place. I've seen it all before, once upon a dream. A dream that seems so real, yet it is nothing more than a glimpse of what is no longer here.

On my own, I stand in the still darkness. Nothing shines, but the stars in the heavens. In the darkness, I feel like nothing is around me. All alone, I take the painful blows to my psyche. And when the pain becomes too much to bear I close my eyes, and feel nothing. What I see is a brick house that shines bright like silver. Its silver glow barely shines through the concealing thick mist and heavy snowfall. Being beckoned, I focus on the pale white door and everything goes dull. When I open up the door I hear the sound of laughter. Everyone is talking; talking with loud but sincere voices that echo throughout the house.

I find myself all alone again, in a big and empty room. On the floor lies black porcelain tile that reflect the world in a completely different kind of light. When I stare into the darkness of the reflecting tile, I hope to see everything shine like starlight. But all I see is the same old me that's been there forever. As I stare more and more forcefully into the darkness, snowflakes begin to fall one by one over my reflection. I shut my eyes so it appears as though my reflection is at peace; lost in sleep, but I know no one will wake me. I wish I could understand how I can make this pain disappear. But no one out there can hear my cries to make it all go away. I'm lost in a deep winter sleep, and all I can do is hope that I will be able to feel again.

While huddled on the floor I feel myself begin to slip through. I now lay on white carpet in a dimly lit room. I remain frozen, ignoring all my surroundings. Suddenly a lull voice whispers into my ear, "Mend the shattered heart before everything becomes a dream." The music of a piano fills the room; it sounds like three people all trying to play at once. I stand to my feet expecting to see a room filled with emptiness but I'm wrong. There is furniture positioned throughout the room and a woman with red hair. She wears a black sweater and blue jeans, and in her hands are a crossword puzzle and a mug of tea. She turns and faces me with a warm, gentle smile. She says to me, "Don't look so sad, everything will be alright. You don't have to be strong for the both of us, just be strong for yourself. But don't be afraid to let out and show how you feel, you are never alone in these battles. You are surrounded by people who love you." I look to find the room now filled with people. It begins to rain. However, the red-headed woman is now gone, but I hear her voice whisper to me, "Don't let your dreams fall and form a bridge that only leads back to memories. Now darling, it's time to go, wake-up."

Now, I'm accompanied in an incandescent world. The snow has melted and the sun now shines with intensity. Serenity. Here everything shines and stays gold, because I'm surrounded by people who care. It's one life, it's this life and it's beautiful.

No one place has the power to make me feel at peace, rather, it's the people I surround myself with and the choice to live in the now. I cannot flood my dreams with memories that cannot be repeated. It only took a message through a dream for me to come to this realization.

-Jack Kitzen

I love

Not for sadness,
as many songs would suggest,
but for days
of happiness, and long nights
of blissful dreaming.
It breathes in my mornings,
and exhales my nights
Yet, I never tire
of its constant company.

I long
for cornflower, blowing
in the wind. I wish
for sapphires, sparkling,
shimmering, hiding
in the deepest
parts of the earth. I want
blueberries,
blackberries at their ripest. I need
ice, translucent,
just barely there. I live
the ocean expanding
out and out,
for miles and miles,
until it dissolves
into sky.
I love the sky,
vibrant, beautiful, stretching
above me
wherever I go.

I do not love the sky
for the clouds, white and soft
as spun cotton, or even for the beautiful,
twinkling stars that dot
the sky once the sun
has disappeared and the moon
begins its reign.

I love the sky for its color
that shifts and fades, but somehow
always remains the same. I love
the deep darkness
of midnight, so quiet and calm, but still
somehow completely alive.

I adore the sky at midday,
the lighthearted
wonder I feel when I look
up to see
the jubilant backdrop
to earth.

The days
that I cannot say that I love
the sky are the days
when it rains. The sky is drained
and replaced
with livid grey.
I love the color
of life.
I love the color
Blue.

-Ann Glackin

Mistakes

A man opens his eyes, stands up, and walks out of his prison cell.

Hello, my name is Ryan Wolff, prisoner number 4011-372, cell number 6. I am 36 years old, and I'm currently in the Huntsville Unit Penitentiary. I've been on death row for ten years, leaving today. Ten fucking years, and today I finally leave by means of by lethal injection. Ten god damn years, for nothing. I've seen things in this damn prison, the kinds of things a person just can't forget. Ten years of seeing prison gangs terrorizing the other prisoners and guards, watching fights break out, hearing people murdered in the night, listening to the sounds of rape happening on the other side of my cell wall. The horrors were inescapable. Every day prisoners left this place, and new prisoners came in, but some of us will never leave at all. I wish I was the one leaving this prison. I want to be a free man. I want to go into society. To walk in somewhere and have people look at me like I was normal, like I was one of them. To remember the way I used to be, just like them. I don't have that opportunity, never will. Instead I leave this prison in a body bag, as a dead man. Just think, I wouldn't have been here if I hadn't made the mistake of being at a wrong place, at a wrong time. Maybe I'm lucky to get out of here, no matter how I have to do it. I have nothing to live for, not here. Any friends you ask? No. There's my cellmate, but that's all he is. I don't call him my friend, but he hasn't tried to kill me either. I only had books to read, and weights to lift. All that time means I'm pretty ripped, too bad I have no one to show off to. I've got a tattoo of a dragon on my right arm. That and being 5'11 means that most people around here don't mess with me. They'll be happy when I'm gone. Here, I could only count on myself. No friends, no one on my side. In this prison, you're on your own. Now I know what you guys are asking, why am I here? What crime did I commit? Let me take you guys 15 years back into my life when I was 21 years old, when I unknowingly started of the continuous downward spiral of my life.

For your purposes, my life started at age 21. The prime of my life.

I started out selling hair cosmetics in Los Angeles, California. I worked for this asshole named Pete Greene. He would treat everyone like trash, but of course I just graduated college to be an entrepreneur. This is the only job I had. I made a lot of money. \$5000 on straight commission. This hair cosmetic only cost \$50, so I sold 100 of these in a month. I was getting rich. Sounds like a dream right? It is. One day I made my own cosmetic. It turned into a hit. I quit my job with Pete Greene 7 months later. I had 45 grand to start my own line. People really seemed to love my product. They always wanted more, so I always gave them more. They demanded more, I supplied more. These people were willing to pay \$50 for a hair cream the shine, fixes, and add color and volume to your hair. At the age of 22, CEO of my own company, I became a millionaire in a year and 3 months. I had factories in New York, New Jersey, California. I was so rich. All my employees were so loyal to me. Random people would kiss my ass just so they could work for me! My life was amazing. Everyone saw me as a god. My product hit big worldwide. More demand and more supply, all it meant was more money for me. Hell, I even got 3 more factories in the world. I was making more money than I knew how to deal with. At the age of 23,

I sold my company to some dude named Thomas Bern. 10.6 billion dollars in my name. I worked pretty fucking hard to get to where I am, just 2 years of working, but they were hell. With that money, I bought a house in Houston, Texas. 300 acres of land, yes 300, just because I could. Hell, it cost me 2.6 billion for the house, decorations and repairs, I didn't care. At the age of 24, a billionaire and a bachelor, I started to spend money on cocaine and heroin. I slept with women almost every day. I was getting more ass than a comfortable couch. Every night, I went out. I became an alcoholic. I was always high, never sober. I never wanted to stop. Eventually though, I had to subside from the drugs. They were killing me. I threw myself in front of a speeding car before I pulled back. I held onto my other vices though. I mean a guy has to have some fun, right? I began to do good things, not just for myself, but for other people to. I began a neighborhood watch. It was making everyone around me safe, me too, at least I thought. My neighbors even reported people trying to invade and rob my house. I felt protected, happy. I did good things for those people. I'm proud of that. I thought I had good things heading my way. At the age of 25, my life was perfect. I was a billionaire and getting laid by hookers 5 times a day, and not just the cheap kind. It was my perfect American dream. I was one successful son of a bitch. Like I said before, it was my prime.

You're probably wondering what this has to do with anything, but this was my life before I ended up in this hell hole of a prison. Before the crime, before the conviction, before the sentence. The prime of my life. But fine, I'll cut to the chase. My life hit rock bottom at 26, when one stupid mistake sent me to this prison to be executed.



-Shannon Contino

-Cynthia Martinez

Silent Voice

The only sounds that I could hear were the sounds of my own voice. I tried hard not to listen to them, but I couldn't stop. Everything that I lived for: vanished. All of the success: gone.

What is it that I have left now? Pain? Agony?

I don't have anything anymore except the sounds of my own voice telling me to do certain things that the eleven year old me would never think to do.

I was diagnosed as a paranoid schizophrenic when I was twenty-three years old. My grandmother was a schizophrenic, so it was very likely that I would be too. My mother always told me that if she never showed any symptoms, then I wouldn't either. Yeah, okay. I was eighteen when I first started showing symptoms. I just got accepted to the University of Delaware and Ryan Hopkins just asked me to prom. However, the idea of the Devil cutting your every thought isn't common in a teenager's mind.

It first started out as little short thoughts in a steady beat once a month. By the time I was twenty, this beat started to pick up its speed: weird thoughts arriving in my mind every week and it wouldn't stop. One year later, someone found me trying to strangle my roommate on top of one the schools building.

Now, I'm stuck with other freaks. Thankfully, because of my condition, I don't have to speak to anyone. Instead of watching all the low-lives trying to cut themselves with the edge of a piece of tape, or the other low-lives punching the walls, I get to sit in a room and paint. Silently. No distractions, nothing. This silence that I have longed for has finally come true. There was nothing that could ever disturb my peace again.

Take the brush and kill her.

"Who?"

Becky.

"Why?"

She deserves it.

"Leave me alone!"

Kill her.

"Leave me alone! Alone! Please! Alone! Stop!"

Now.

"Stop it! Stop it! Please! I don't want this anymore! Leave!"

Jill...

"Leave... me... ALONE!"

Do it.

"STOP!"

Do the right thing, Jill

"I can't take this anymore!"

I took the brush that was covered in red, and stuffed it in my mouth as far as it can go.

I can't breathe anymore. I can't see anything. Nothing. There isn't a thing out there. The voice can't tell me anything anymore. It's silent. I can't breathe anymore.

Sweet dreams, Jill.

-Asar Nadi



-Victoria Martin

Alone

I'm hidden all alone
in a big World of life
I'm blended with the shadows
where nobody can see me
Wishing to be in the light

Everyone is guided in a direction
each door ajar
waiting to enter a brand new lead
Time is valuable and you need common sense
To achieve.

I'm enclosed with no way out
in a small empty space
I'm caged in the dark
where nobody can see me
Wishing to be in the light

People are destined to find who they are
with different types of people in each aisle
waiting to accomplish their goals.
Time is valuable and being in a deadlock
Will deprive you of what you can do
You need common sense in order to achieve

If your hidden all alone in the world
or enclosed in a small empty space
nobody to see you or your locked in
you have to remember if you fail
Or if your make a mistake you can
still learn and achieve.
Don't lose hope.

-Sarah Aloe

Disillusioned Dreaming

When I was younger
Just a little girl
I used to imagine
That I was
a magical being
Incapable
of being hurt
I would
be put through trials.
Tied
up, kidnapped,
thrown
in jail.
And the prospect
of looming
danger
seemed exciting,
mysterious.
I used to hope
danger
would find me,
imagine
how I would react
if it did.
I'd
imagine
myself brave.
Fearless,
as I faced
down
oppressors,
With the sure
knowledge
good would
always
triumph.

Now I see the...
adventures,
I imagined,
are true
But they
aren't safe,
and they aren't sure,
and they aren't beautiful,
They are horrific,
Heart breaking
unthinkable.

The frantic yowl
of a family lost,
of a mother
fighting, desperately
trying,
to hold on
to a young girl
being torn
away.
The strain of rope
on her
chafed, burned,
scarred limbs.
The crack
and whistle
of his whip,
the clang
of her
chains
destroying any
hope for escape

I still imagine
as I witness
these horrors.
I force myself
to see
what I would do
if the chains
truly bound
me.
I realize
I would crumple.
I have crumpled.
Finally, I recognize
the despair
in danger
that as a child
I had
failed to see.
The adventure is lost.

It's still a game.
It's still pretend.
But it's no longer
My dream, my fantasy.
It's become a nightmare

The Foulest Heist

There are brigands who solely exist
to plunder crimson, pumping diamonds;
suave gentleman, with silver
tongues, with golden
grins.

There are bandits whose tacky treasure troves
are layered with the wares
others have toiled for;
untamed sticky
fingers, and jade
eyes.

There are pickpockets whose bounty is fed
not with coins, but thoughts
brewed on sleepless nights.
Intangible gems
vitalized by capitalistic
wallets.

Yet the most malevolent transgressors,
with their sincere hollow apologies
are shielded by loving, benevolent faces.
These are the temporal lobe thieves.
Not white coats performing lobotomies,
but the pale
helpless, who fester in miserable squalor.

These are the thieves who are fueled
by suffering.
Thirsty.
They pump into their veins tears
pilfered from the inner ducts of the family
who surround them;

but too thirsty,
they fill to the brim, leaving crusted
vessels in waiting room chairs next to them;

but too thirsty
they wallow in the torturous moments
compelling the surrounding vessels to unflinchingly
stand guard providing solicited
comfort.

The vessels, simple shells,
are allowed no sighs of relief
but bare it all silently while
hugging
the thief.

-Ms. Molenko, advisor

